

Table of international exchange rates for various countries including Abu Dhabi, Albania, Andorra, etc.

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Sport 96



The £15 million man: why Alan Shearer is a bargain. Latest from Atlanta. 66-1 shock for Goodwood. County championship in the unique sports tabloid.

Happy birthday Edinburgh Festival

Review

Plus: why women are taking over the orchestra's, the new Ben Elton

The 'fattest cat' who is set to make £40m in just seven months

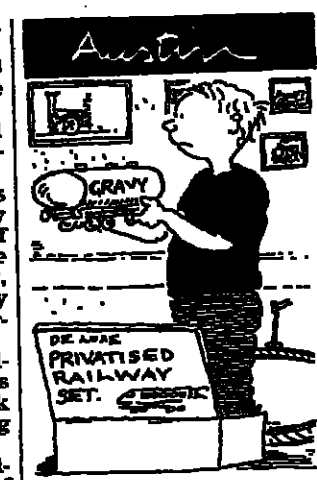
Keith Harper and Dan Atkinson

Former British Rail terminal manager, Sandy Anderson, was last night set to reap a bonus of £39.9 million from the sale of his train leasing company...



Sandy Anderson, set for a bonus of almost £40 million from the sale of Porterbrook

company is 3.68 per cent. He will get £18.43 million; Mr Gilbert's share is 2.48 per cent. He will receive £11.78 million; Mr Watson's share is 1 per cent. His stake is valued at £4.75 million.



Management buy-outs and trade sales. Number: 49. Proceeds to August, 1995: £1,644m.

undervalued" by the Government and the managers were now cashing in at the taxpayer's expense.

New scare wrecks beef truce

Stephen Bates in Brussels, Paul Brown and Michael White

The Government's hopes of an early lifting of the beef ban were dashed last night as the European Commission made clear that its admission that BSE can be transmitted from cows to their calves had ruined any chance of the phased ending of the ban...

Theory of maternal transmission is 'basically rubbish' - Agriculture Ministry spokesman, 1994.

Maternal transmission is of 'no significance to public health' - David Maclean, Junior agriculture minister, 1991.

There is a 'continuing lack of evidence of significant maternal or horizontal transmission' - Gillian Shephard, Minister of Agriculture, 1994.

'If maternal transmission does occur it is unlikely to be a major feature of this disease' - Keith Meldrum, Chief Veterinary Officer, 1991.

products - tallow and bull semen - lifted by yesterday was still enmeshed in technical problems. The results published yesterday by the Ministry of Agriculture show that, in a control study, 42 calves born of 272 cattle which had died of BSE subsequently developed the disease themselves.

Down in the meadow, you might cure the blues



FORGET the Prozac - a trip down to a chalky field during July to September to look for a stalky plant with vivid yellow leaves edged with tiny black beads may be just as effective in dispelling the blues.

and was as effective as conventional anti-depressants in some studies. Researchers from Germany and America have re-examined 32 studies covering a total of 1,787 patients with mild or moderate depression who had been treated with extracts of hypericum.

used in folk medicine for hundreds of years for a range of conditions, including depression. In Germany, where herbal medicines are widely licensed, more than 2.7 million prescriptions were written by doctors for hypericum preparations in 1993, at a cost of around £26 million.

have failed to find one. The researchers say that wider studies need to be carried out, looking in more detail at what types of preparations of hypericum are most effective, and at which doses.

has traditionally been used for inflammation and burns, but is also useful for depression, nervous tension, and emotional upsets associated with the menopause.

Inside section with sub-sections for Britain, World News, Finance, and Sport.

Britain: Fertility experts expressed sadness and frustration as they started destroying more than 3,300 'unwanted' embryos.

World News: The most serious leadership squabbles since it came to power in 1994 have riven South Africa's African National Congress.

Finance: House prices are rising at their fastest for seven years as consumer confidence returns to levels seen in the late '80s boom.

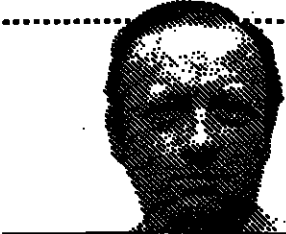
Sport: Alan Shearer's £15 million signing appears a huge gamble, but Newcastle could well make millions on the deal.

Weather, Comment and Letters, Friday Review, Quick Crossword, Radio 12, TV 12, and a barcode.

Advertisement for American Express Travellers Cheques on the spot at Lloyds Bank.

Sketch

P is for recovery in feelgood Essex



John Ezard

ESSEX Ford is on Cherry-down East, one of those optimistically named, tedious highways which have sucked the character from nearly all southern towns. But at midnight yesterday it hummed with adrenalin like a Grand Prix starting grid. Mechanics and sales staff did final checks as scores of P-reg cars, packed with couples, children and friends, lined up revving outside the showroom. As the hour struck, they drove out in a jubilant cavalcade, horns blaring and hazard lights flashing "just to show people they had arrived", the dealers' chairman, Philip Maskell, said. All it needed was a chorus of Happy Days Are Here Again. The feelgood factor had returned — at least for some — to Basildon, barometer of Conservative working-class fortunes. It was preceded by an epic, non-alcoholic party with perisols, wide-screen television and beefburgers. "I don't think beef sales in Basildon have been overly affected by ESE," Mr Maskell said. Essex Ford, catering for an area with 180,000 people, handed over 125 P-reg cars by midnight. By last night it had sold another 125 and, with more orders in the pipeline, is on schedule to meet its target of 660 "units" by the end of this month. That internal target is higher than the quota set for by Ford. These are the showroom's best figures since the recession's first shakedown fall after 1989. It repeated nationally, they would realise the industry's hopes of selling 500,000 cars in August for the first time in six years. The showroom didn't bother with a party in 1993, when fewer than 30 new vehicles left by midnight. "It would have been uneconomic and too depressing for the staff," Mr Maskell said. "Total August sales in 1993 were round 300, catastrophically below break-even. In 1994 they were 475, last year 670. It has been a long haul. "I don't think the feelgood factor is electric — but it's back," he said. Asked about the political implications, he said: "It's difficult. There are a lot of hurt people in this area who had faith in the 90s, who changed their lifestyle and then had to revert. These people have long memories about being let down." In the showroom, Gordon and Benita Jones, in their sixties, hadn't risked picking up their Mondeo Mistral at the party. It was her ruby wedding present, he said. "If it had got scratched, we wouldn't have noticed in the dark," said Gordon, a retired plumber and heating engineer. "They've been able to buy cars since their children left home in the early 1980s. Benita said: "There's a terrible lot of people who can't manage it round here but that depends on how much they spend. We don't smoke, drink or have expensive holidays." John Greer, aged 32, a bank manager from Stamford Hope, collecting an Escort 16V, said: "For me the feelgood factor never went away. I have a cheap mortgage and a reasonably secure job. I find that for most people, though, it's hardly back at all." Two couples collecting new cars, Christopher and Christine Belcher and John and Sheila Harwood, disagreed over whether the recovery was real. Mrs Harwood said it wasn't and the Tories would lose Basildon. Mr Belcher said: "Things are improving in the run-up to the election." Emma Pigram, aged 17, from Canvey Island, was in with her boyfriend Paul Ford, 19, to buy a Fiesta. Paul, who has cystic fibrosis, paid for it with a Motability grant. Emma, who said she had never known anything except the recession, itemised what it meant to her: "Walking through Basildon and nearly every shop being empty. "Shops closing down in Canvey. Two of our friends not being able to afford a pushchair for their baby. Seeing a character called Loadsamoney on television as a kid and not pushing his sights too high. His mother assured me he really was serious about wanting to become a profes-

Company risks entering legal morass as it takes on American operator over 'malicious false claims'

BT sues rival in price war

Simon Hewitt, Industrial Editor. SIGNS that Britain's increasingly competitive telecommunications market could deteriorate into a legal morass came yesterday as BT, itself facing allegations of misleading customers about its rivals, served notice that it was to sue America's biggest long-distance operator, AT&T. The privatised group — which still dominates the British market but is facing competition from more than 150 companies — said it was taking legal action against AT&T for making "malicious" false statements about BT's prices and for infringing its trademark. BT is to make a full statement of claim in the High Court by the end of next week. AT&T said BT's allegations were unfounded, and observers expect the legal battle may not be resolved until the autumn. The legal move appears to centre on an AT&T brochure which, according to BT, claims that it could offer customers lower charges on nearly all national and international phone services. It is thought that AT&T used the BT logo in the brochure in a table setting out to take legal action against BT. One BT source denied the competitive claims from AT&T, saying that up to 65 per cent of long distance and overseas calls were cheaper with BT. AT&T is no stranger to cut-throat marketing techniques. US consumers have for many years been deluged by aggressive advertising from rival operators and marketing techniques like cold calling from companies trying to wrinkle custom away from their competitors. Yesterday the US company, which began offering services to businesses and selected small customers only this year, rejected BT's claims as a clear attempt by the dominant operator to protect its customer base from competition. "This is a strong arm tactic and we and our lawyers are confident that we can substantiate our claims," the company said. BT's action is not the first of its kind in the UK market. Last year the mobile phone company Orange was sued for malicious falsehood and infringement of trademark by its rival Vodafone. Vodafone lost a fact that Orange exploited in follow-on advertising. But the battle is evidence of a marked shift in the UK telecommunications market and transferred to cable services. The allegations about BT's practices and its own litigation come in the midst of a separate but related row between BT and Ofcom. The watchdog has given the company until today to agree to a new set of price caps and accept new powers for Ofcom to investigate and penalise anti-competitive behaviour by BT. The company — which is happy with the price caps — claims that the new powers would leave it with no adequate right of appeal against a Monopolies Commission inquiry by refusing to endorse the Ofcom package. Some City observers believe BT will reject the package in an attempt to force the Government to pledge speedy reforms of fair trading legislation, to provide an appeal mechanism.

Shearer 'failed to score with his head'

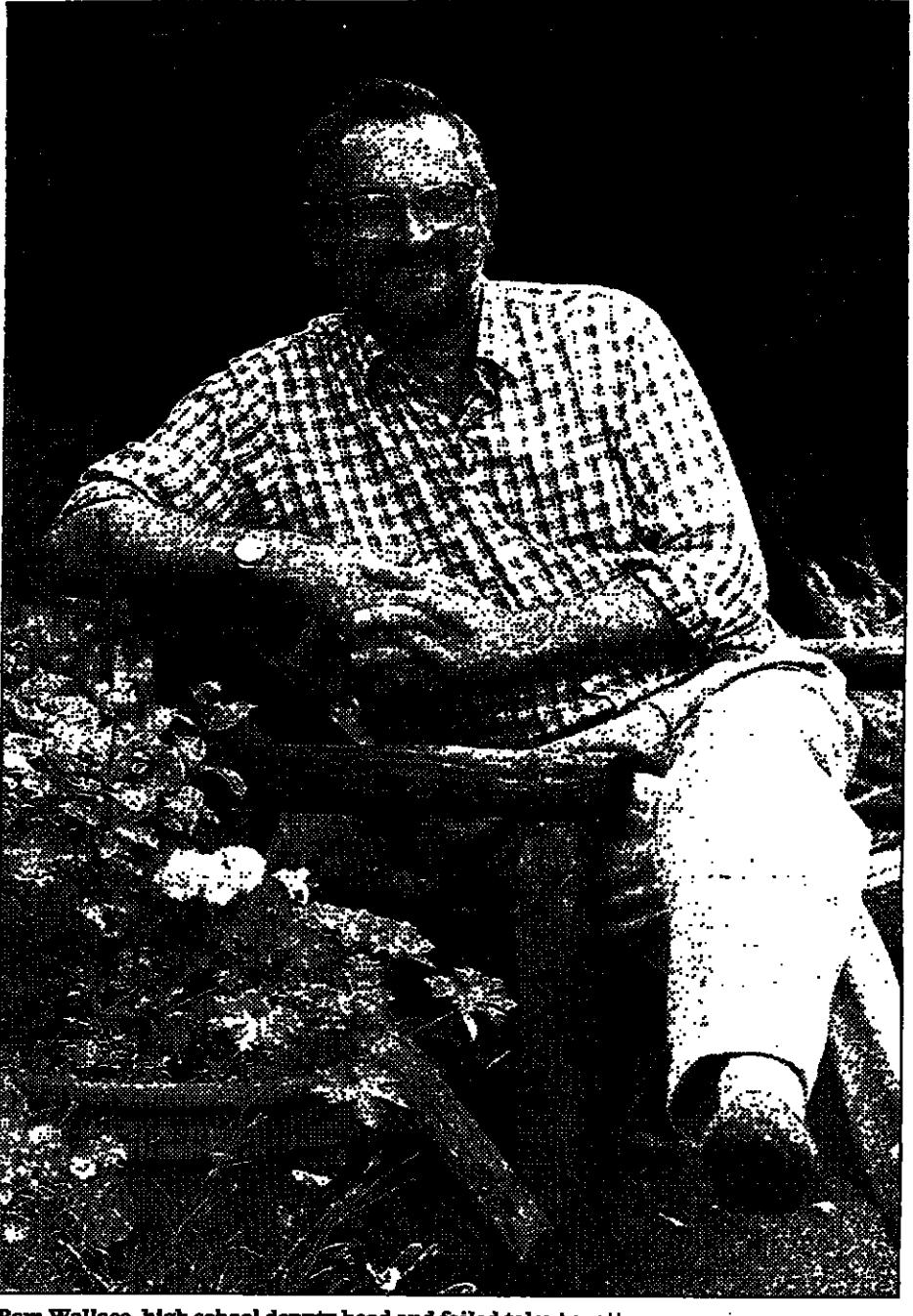
Careers advice was offside, writes Vivek Chaudhary

THE gangly schoolboy, accompanied by his mother, walked into the deputy headmaster's office for a bit of end of term careers advice, but was in little doubt about what he wanted to be. However, when the lad said he wanted to become a professional footballer, Ram Wallace, deputy head of Gosforth High School, Newcastle upon Tyne, told him: "Pull the other one." Ten years and this week's £15 million transfer fee later, Mr Wallace is left eating a fairly large slice of humble pie after revealing that the 16-year-old was Alan Shearer, Newcastle United's world record signing. Mr Wallace said: "I remember I was allocated to interview Alan before he was due to leave Gosforth High. I thought at the time I was being level-headed with him and not pushing his sights too high. His mother assured me he really was serious about wanting to become a profes-



Mark Knopfler... early efforts were 'dirge-like'

if he failed in football. The deputy headmaster, who now claims that he was only joking when he made the "Pull the other one" remark, has indulged in a touch of talent spotting once before. Two decades before Shearer came to the school, Mr Wallace told off one of his pupils for playing a guitar, telling him he would "never get anywhere playing that kind of stuff." Mark Knopfler obviously did not take this comment to heart and recently quit Dire Straits after earning around £50 million from worldwide hits. Mr Wallace said: "He was twanging some dirge-like tune. I took him to one side and told him he would never get anywhere playing that kind of stuff. Now look at him — a multi-millionaire." An avid Newcastle fan, Mr Wallace said that he was delighted when Shearer signed for the club and is looking forward to seeing him in action. More importantly, he says, he is relieved that the careers advice he gave to the young Shearer fell on deaf ears. Mr Wallace added: "The school is very proud of Alan and on several occasions we have used him as a role model in assemblies about how pupils should conduct themselves."



Ram Wallace, high school deputy head and failed talent spotter PHOTOGRAPH BY TED DITCHBURN

Starlets who confounded their critics

- "We don't like their sound. Groups of guitars are on the way out." — Decca records rejecting The Beatles in 1962. "The biggest no talent I ever worked with." — Decca boss rejecting Buddy Holly. "I give the Rolling Stones about another two years." — Mick Jagger in 1964. "Can't act. Can't sing. Slightly bald. Can dance a little." — Film company's verdict on Fred Astaire's 1928 screen test. "You have a chip on your tooth, your Adam's apple sticks out too far and you talk too slow." — Film executive rejecting Clint Eastwood in 1959. "Reagan doesn't have the presidential look." — Film producer rejecting Ronald Reagan, for the role of president, in 1964. "You ought to go back to driving a truck." — Concert manager, firing Elvis Presley in 1954. "Forget it. No Civil War picture ever made a nickel." — MGM executive advising against investing in Gone With The Wind. "We are willing to return the manuscript." — Publisher rejecting Jane Austen's novel, Northanger Abbey. "That rainbow song's no good. Take it out." — MGM memo after the initial showing of The Wizard of Oz, referring to Somewhere Over the Rainbow. "It will never be generally read." — Newspaper review of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights in 1849.



'No hoppers'... Buddy Holly (left), Fred Astaire, Ronald Reagan and Marilyn Monroe

Cuba trial for US fugitive

Businessman accused of state fraud and economic crimes. fugitives from the US legal system living in Cuba. He fled the US in 1971 after fraud charges amounting to \$294 million (£146 million) over his alleged deception of mutual fund investors. The Havana government has shielded him despite further US indictments, including one in 1989 of using the country as a base for drug trafficking. He was also charged in connection with an illegal \$20,000 donation to Richard Nixon's 1972 presidential election campaign. A US spokeswoman said the extradition treaty signed with Cuba in 1994 had not been invoked to secure Mr Vesco's return for trial in the US. "We have let the Cuban government know that we are interested in having him back," she said. Mr Vesco was arrested on May 31 1995. He was charged with irregularities concerning a medical drug called Vioxan, or VX. It is alleged that he illegally negotiated deals related to Vioxan with

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Review

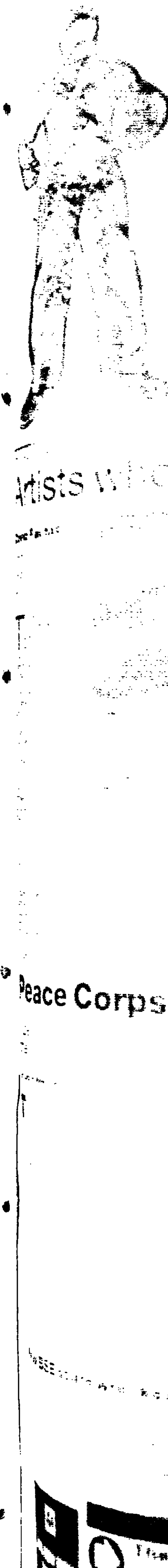
Struggling with Eliot's posers

Michael Billington. Murder in The Cathedral. Aleksia Theatre. THIS is a strange occasion: a production in Romanian of T S Eliot's 1935 verse-drama played by a new company, Art-Inter Odeon. When one learns that it was formed from the relics of the oppressed Odeon Theatre Bucharest, that it is homeless, struggling and independent, and that it is heavily involved with a Romanian orphanage, one desperately wants it to succeed; and one can truthfully say that this production by Mihai Maniutiu (who last year directed The Shrew at the Haymarket, Leicester) shows evidence of a powerful and disciplined theatrical imagination. How well it serves Eliot's intention is more open to debate. Eliot's play presents problems in any language. It shows Thomas Becket returning from France in 1170, confronting the temptations of a martyrdom which he finally achieves through a brutal stabbing justified by its perpetrators on the grounds of political expediency. But, dramatically, there is little development. Becket returns from exile aware of his impending fate and the temptations of the flesh and of temporal power are easily brushed aside: only in the scene with the Fourth Tempter, who appeals to Becket's spiritual vanity and the potential glory of martyrdom, do we feel any sense of internal debate. Steven Pinnott's solution in a recent RSC production was to put the play into 1930s cos-

Home Office fires back at gun lobby violence link

Alan Travis, Home Affairs Editor. THE Home Office has clashed with the gun lobby over links between legal gun ownership and crime. The Home Office published a robust defence of research demonstrating a link after Lord Cullen, who is heading the Dublin massacre inquiry, asked officials to comment on

evidence from the gun lobby challenging the research. Evidence submitted by Richard Munday, the editor of Handgunner magazine, and the British Shooting Sports Council, claimed to have "destroyed the reliability" of the Home Office case. Pat Mayhew of the Home Office research and statistics directorate, says her evidence is not a statement of government policy.



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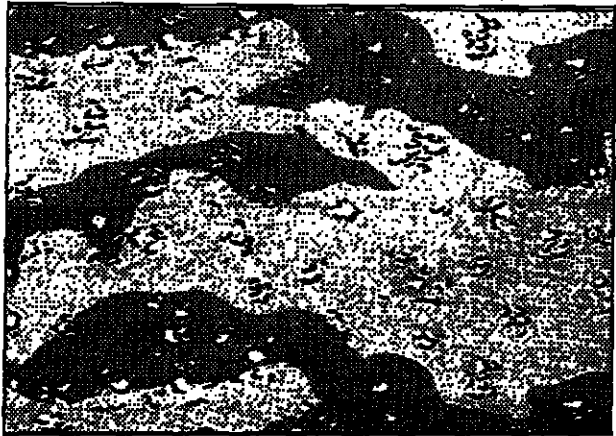


Illustrations from a French manual on camouflage, published circa 1920, which seek to demonstrate the possibilities of imaginative military costume

Artists who became masters of disguise

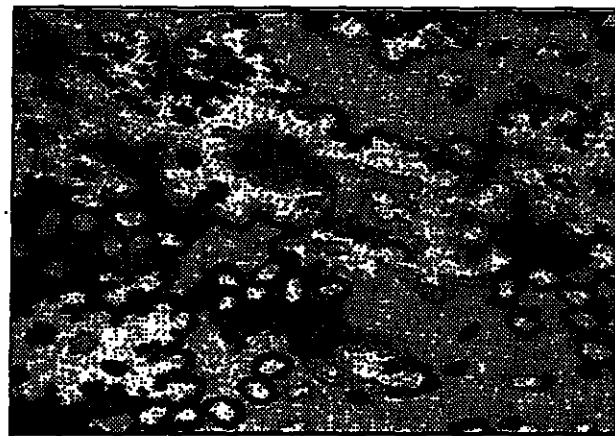
David Fairhall on revelations in a new study on the craft of camouflage

THE British army of the first world war had its Artists' Rifles. The French had Les Peintres de la Guerre au Camouflage, a group of painters who specialised in the new-found military art — prompted by the appearance of reconnaissance aircraft over the battlefield — of disguising gun positions and later individual soldiers with patterned camouflage.



US army's 'chocolate chip' pattern, as seen in the Gulf war

By the end of the war the French had camouflage workshops employing more than 1,000 men and 8,000 women. The British military brass decided that perhaps the French were on to something. They assembled their own camouflage team, involving artists like Solomon J. Solomon and Harry Paget.



The tree motif favoured by the Waffen-SS in world war two

from Manet to Kandinsky. Picasso was among those who grasped the artistic, as well as the military, potential in all this. On seeing a camouflaged cannon in the streets of Paris, he cried out: "It is we who created that".

began extensive research to develop, among others, the "chocolate chip" desert pattern familiar from the Gulf war. Nowadays every army likes to have its own distinctive patterns — witness the newly formed forces in former Yugoslavia — and experimental science, rather than intuitive artistry, is beginning to dominate the design process. For example, modern camouflage dyes are chosen not just for their daytime colours, but also for their infra-red characteristics, so as to confuse night-time image-intensifiers. The British army, which for decades has stuck to its four-colour DPM (Disruptive Pattern Material), is working on hi-tech developments for its next range of uniforms. These include light-sensitive "chameleon" camouflage, that changes to suit the background. Brassy's Book of Camouflage by Tim Newark and Quentin Newark, £25

Acquittal of war criminal angers Italy

John Hooper, Southern Europe Correspondent

WHAT had been billed as the world's last Nazi crimes trial ended in uproar last night with a military court in Rome ruling the defendant was guilty, but unconvicted.



Erich Priebke: trial was swamped by controversy

As news of their verdict reached parliament, normal proceedings were interrupted to allow a far-left MP make an impassioned speech.

Armando Cossutta said: "The crimes of this delinquent, murdering butcher Priebke can never be expunged by a statute of limitation in the minds of the Italian people."

A centre-left MP announced he would be tabling a bill for the abolition of Italy's military courts. But the film director Franco Zeffirelli, a former partisan and now a senator for Silvio Berlusconi's right-of-centre Forza Italia party, felt it was "right to place a stone over such distant, unclear events from the past".

playing a leading role in the killing of 335 Italians in retaliation for a partisan bomb attack on German soldiers. He refused to testify in person, but in a written submission to the court admitted taking off the names of the victims as they entered the caves south of Rome and shooting two of them personally.

Both petitions were based on evidence that the presiding judge, Agostino Quistelli, had advocated Priebke's acquittal in a conversation held before he was allotted the case. One of Italy's most distinguished jurists, Paolo Barile, said last night that a crucial error had been made in allowing Priebke to be tried by a military, rather than civilian, court. "He wasn't a soldier, but an officer in the SS, a unit which required an oath of absolute loyalty. He put himself in the position of not being able to refuse an order."

Peace Corps sex battle settled

Male worker wins record pay-out after harassment by woman boss

Ian Katz in New York

THE United States government has agreed to pay \$250,000 (£166,600) to a married Peace Corps worker who accused his female boss of trying to bully him into having an affair. The settlement is believed to be the biggest pay-out by the government to a male employee alleging sexual harassment by a female superior.

Raymond Millikin, aged 55, claimed that Deborah Holt Kirk, at the time inspector-general of the organisation that sends young Americans to do volunteer work abroad, frequently called him into her office then tried to grab and kiss him. According to Mr Millikin, Ms Kirk began making advances after announcing plans to reorganise her department and asking whether he would like to be her deputy.

When he eventually complained, Mr Millikin said Ms Kirk and other managers punished him by giving him tedious work and criticising his performance. Under the settlement, Mr Millikin has agreed to resign from the Peace Corps. He plans to move to a 55-acre ranch in Montana. Ms Kirk resigned in April 1995, because, according to her lawyer, "she had a medical issue and decided to move on".

The settlement is far from the biggest awarded to any male employee. In Los Angeles, in 1994, a male worker at a hot-tub manufacturer won \$1 million in damages after claiming that his female boss made unwanted sexual advances almost daily. However Mr Millikin's lawyer, Gary Simpson, told the Washington Post that the payment indicated that "the government has acknowledged that the harm done to a man or a woman in one of these sex power plays is totally and utterly unacceptable".

New BSE scare wrecks Major's hopes on lifting beef ban

continued from page 1 properly before there is any more culling." However, Mr Hogg said: "We shall need to take stock of the practical implications, in particular for the proposed selective cull of cattle, and what basis of selection stands to produce the most effective acceleration in the decline of BSE."

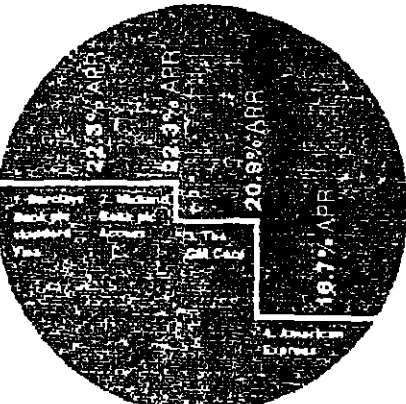
There was uncertainty over Mr Hogg's Commons statement on July 24 when he said that feed was "the historic and by far the most important cause of BSE" — five days after his committee of experts had considered the mother-calf link, of which he made no mention.

One bright spot for the Government was that the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee, which advises the Government on BSE and its human equivalent CJD, said no further action was needed to protect public health in light of the findings.

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The nationalist issue is not going to go away and is likely to haunt the Edinburgh Festival in the future even more than in the past.
Michael Billington
Review cover story

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Government's credibility is undermined and culling will have to be reviewed, but spokesmen maintain disease will die out by 2008

Ministry sticks to its guns over BSE

Officials insist calf infection changes little

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

THE admission yesterday that cows can pass on BSE to their calves is another setback in a series of public relations disasters for the Ministry of Agriculture in recent months. Despite increasing evidence to the contrary, the ministry has stuck to the line that "maternal transmission of BSE" was unlikely. Its whole case has been based on the fact that cattle that have suffered BSE had acquired it through eating contaminated feed.

Yesterday, however, it was finally conceded that cows can and do pass on BSE to their offspring, and that wiping out the disease would prove harder as a result. The whole culling programme of cattle which had come into contact with BSE would have to be reviewed, because it was based on the belief that

the date when BSE can be eradicated and the time when European confidence in British beef will be restored.

Although experts outside the ministry, notably Stephen Deafield, a statistician, have demonstrated to Seac that vertical transmission was occurring, the conclusive proof came from one of the ministry's own experiments.

In 1989 two groups of 300 animals were isolated, one the offspring of confirmed cases of BSE and the other from cows in the same herd and the same age whose mothers had not suffered the disease.

The results so far are that of the 273 animals that have died or been killed from the first group 42 had developed BSE, but in the second group only 13 had developed the disease. The ministry says this provides evidence that the risk of maternal transmission is 10 per cent for the BSE-infected cows.

Milk has been ruled out as a way of passing the infection, and the most likely explanation is that the calf caught it while still in the womb. This theory has yet to be proved but the calves most likely to be infected appeared to be from mothers who were in the later stages of the disease at the time of their pregnancy.

However, despite the 10 per cent transmission figure the ministry claims the risk of passing BSE from one generation to the next is as little as 1 per cent in "field conditions" because under normal conditions only one in 10 calves live to have calves of their own.

The ministry reasons that the steep decline in new cases of BSE will continue and that the disease will die out unaided in two generations. Since the average dairy cow lives six years, BSE will naturally disappear by 2006, the ministry claimed yesterday.

Cows over 30 months old killed to date

cows	106,000
steers	84,000
heifers	28,000
bulls	2,500
Total	310,000

Number of BSE cases slaughtered to date

1988	2,576
1989	8,061
1990	16,641
1991	29,027
1992	43,155
1993	41,085
1994	28,733
1995	17,152
1996	6,216

maternal transmission did not occur.

There was no sign yesterday that the ministry had learnt lessons from previous disasters. The worst came in March when, after years of insisting that there was absolutely no possibility of human infection from BSE, ministers had to concede there was.

As each chapter in the BSE crisis has unfolded, officials have had to concede that previous reassurances were over-optimistic, or that officially ridiculed theories were correct after all.

There was no sign yesterday that the ministry had broken the habit. Within minutes of conceding that vertical transmission did occur, officials were trying to reassure people it did not really matter. The number of cases was so small as to make little difference to BSE's eventual extinction.

The Government's independent scientific committee the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (Seac) agreed that the new findings do not pose an increased risk to public health, but they do further undermine the credibility of the ministry as far as the culling programme is concerned. It also pushes back



Despite the threat to his income of yet more bad news about BSE, Stephen Wharfe takes pleasure in the birth of another calf on his Knutsford, Cheshire, farm. PHOTOGRAPH BY HOWARD BARLOW

Farmers philosophical over latest blow to livelihood

'The scare has been out of all proportion to the risk'

David Ward

UNDER a Cheshire sky filled with swooping house martins, a four-hour-old calf with slightly unsteady legs sniffed the air while her mother, a Friesian cow called Number 27, looked on protectively.

Across the field, a Hereford bull wondered if he was the father. He wasn't the calf, and four others born yesterday on a 200-acre farm near Knutsford, were the products of artificial insemination.

As the calf began to suckle, farmer Stephen Wharfe sighed with satisfaction. "That's what we want to see," he explained. "They need to start taking milk within 12 hours. They have to take in colostrum, which is rich in essential antibodies."

Yet more bad news from the Ministry of Agriculture could not detract from the basic joy of the life cycle repeating itself. Mr Wharfe, a farmer for 35 years, enjoys his job but is frustrated at the way the BSE crisis has developed —

and at the drop in his income.

"I've always maintained that the chances of getting BSE are like a blind man looking in a dark room for a black hat that isn't there," he said.

The fact that scientists have now decided that 1 per cent of calves will inherit BSE from their mothers is neither here nor there; things cannot get much worse than they already are, yesterday's pretty little black and white calf will fetch just £100 when she goes to Chelford market in a couple of weeks. A year ago she would have sold for £250.

Mr Wharfe had one case of BSE in his herd three years ago, but has been clear since. "There were 3,000 cases a week then, when BSE was at its height. Now there are about 200. The compensation system worked very well and made sure that nothing could slip through the net."

Ask Mr Wharfe for his views about how the Government, public and media have reacted to BSE scares this year and he talks of bewildered frustration.

"Farmers realise there is a problem but the scare has been out of all proportion to the risk. The risk of BSE is so small it's barely worth a mention."

Mr Wharfe, needless to say, has not given up beef. He is deeply worried by the

nation's shift to vegetarianism, a shift which has galloped ahead during the last year of confusion and panic.

"BSE is on the way out. If this had blown up three years ago, it would have been much easier to have understood the future that has been created. It seems tragic when we were getting on top of the situation."

"Over the years we have had lots of eradication schemes in agriculture. Tuberculosis was eradicated in the fifties, brucellosis in the seventies. People possibly had more to fear from those than they will ever fear from BSE."

"The problem has been hyped up out of all proportion. We are being asked to do the impossible and prove a negative. But everything we consume has an element of risk, and beef is no exception."

Draconian measures, including the slaughter of 500,000 cows, have been introduced to get rid of BSE; in that context the latest ministry finding is academic, almost irrelevant.

"It doesn't really change things. Nothing else will have to be done because of it. One per cent of a declining number of infected cows isn't going to be significant. The only worry we have is that various people will hype this up, as they did last week with sheep."

Raiders handcuff mother of Greek tycoon

THE mother-in-law of a Greek brandy tycoon was recovering last night after raiders burst into the family's home and handcuffed her to the bannisters before escaping with thousands of pounds in cash and jewellery.

Stephanie Slater was ordered to open up a safe by the hooded gunmen at the £1 million home of Spyros Metaxas in Godalming, Surrey.

Once inside the house they fired two shots, one of which injured a Rottweiler guard dog, and then ordered Mrs Slater, who was alone in the house, to open the safe.

Mrs Slater, in her 50s, eventually managed to free herself and raise the alarm at a neighbour's house.

Her daughter, Kimberley, and son-in-law, Spyros, who sold his stake in the multi-million pound family brandy business in 1988, were on holiday in the Greek islands.

In the last couple of years security has been stepped up at the 10-bed house, where the grounds are patrolled by security guards.

Detectives were trying to establish how the gang of four or five men managed to breach the tight security cordon and break into the mansion.

"They were wearing balaclavas to hide their faces and two of them were carrying firearms," said a police spokesman.

Time to pay £175,000 to reporter over KGB claim

TIME magazine yesterday agreed to pay £175,000 in compensation to an American journalist over an article in which it reported allegations that he accepted money from the KGB and was fed stories by the Soviet intelligence agency.

Dusko Doder, the former Moscow bureau chief of the Washington Post, has been battling to clear his name since December 1992 when Time published the story giving details of a Soviet defector's claims that the journalist had been paid \$1,000 by a KGB agent.

In a statement read in the High Court in London yesterday, Time said it withdrew "without reservation" any "disparagement" of Mr Doder's reputation and professional integrity. The magazine conceded it had "no evi-

North-east leads way with boom in numbers as leisure industry gears up

Cabbies learn service with a smile to woo more tourists

James Meikle
Community Affairs Editor

TAXI drivers, traffic wardens and dentists are being offered customer care courses by tourist chiefs anxious to improve Britain's reputation for service.

Day-long lessons that began within the hotel and holiday trade are being adapted to other fields, including GPs' surgeries, hospitals and town centre stores, as part of the battle to open up a safe by the hooded gunmen at the £1 million home of Spyros Metaxas in Godalming, Surrey.

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"They were wearing balaclavas to hide their faces and two of them were carrying firearms," said a police spokesman.

Mr Wharfe, needless to say, has not given up beef. He is deeply worried by the

Northumbria ditches Andy Capp

Holidaymakers flock to unspoilt 'golden coast' to escape crowds

Peter Hetherington

SURVEYING the castle-topped coastline, the Cheviots and Hadrian's Wall country from the cottages at Beacon Hill Farm, the Graham family could not contain their enthusiasm. "Britain's best-kept secret," they chorused as the westerly cut through the trees, sending holidaymakers running for wool.

For the past five years Tina Graham, a consultant cardiac surgeon from Birmingham, his wife, Lorraine, and their four children have been coming to local theatre productions to train times and coach tours.

Hugh Clark, trading policy director of the British Retail Consortium, said: "Americans tend to see service with charm as a skill and a requirement whereas Britons find it difficult, almost implying subservience."

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Privatised rail firms try to head off strikes

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

THE newly privatised train companies yesterday were preparing for talks with the rail unions to head off two 24-hour strikes before and after the August bank holiday which would seriously disrupt the rail network.

Conductors, ticket examiners and on-train catering staff at nine operating companies are threatening to strike on August 23 and 27 in two separate disputes over productivity, pay and refreshment breaks.

The strikes have been set to coincide with industrial action by London Underground drivers on those days.

The drivers' series of one-day stoppages is set to continue into September. Their next strike is on Wednesday, with others on August 13 and September 5 and 9.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport union yesterday wrote to the nine companies. They are North West Regional Railways, South Wales and West Thames Trains, North London Railways, Great Western Trains, InterCity East Coast, Cross-Country Trains, Merseyside Electric and Regional Railways North East.

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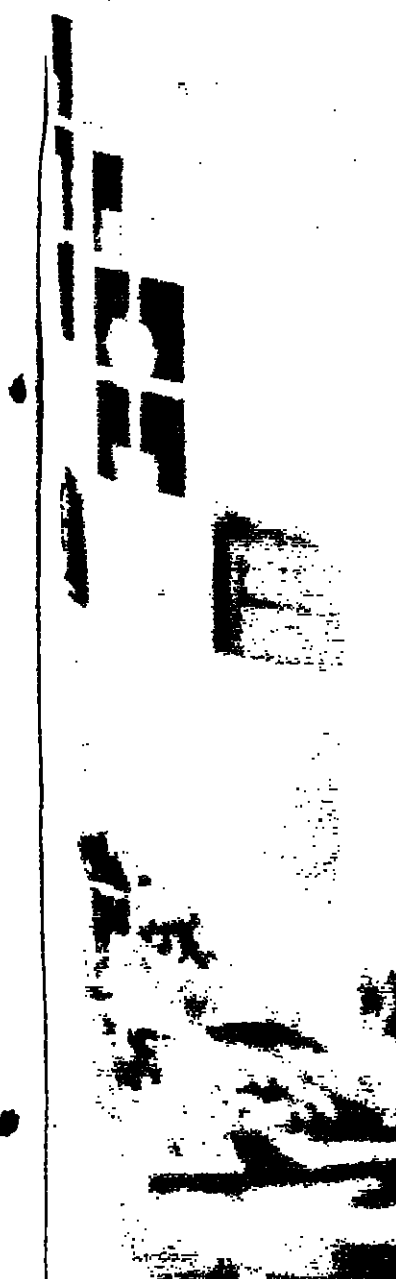
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Clinics start destruction of embryos

Chris Millill
Medical Correspondent

FERTILITY experts spoke of their sadness and frustration yesterday as they went about the task of destroying thousands of embryos which have reached the end of their legal storage life.

The anti-abortion group Life claimed the embryos were being "deliberately put to death" and called on the Official Solicitor, Peter Harris, to intervene. But Mr Harris said he had no powers to do so.

A law which came into effect in 1991 prevents embryos being stored for longer than five years, unless couples have consented to an extension of another five years. More than 3,300 will have to be destroyed by tonight because their "parents" failed to respond to letters warning of the deadline.

Hundreds more are being disposed of because they are no longer wanted, or not being given to other couples or research. IVP specialist Ian Craft, director of the London Gynaecology and Fertility Centre, said he had hoped for more time to trace the parents.

Thawing started when staff at the centre realised there

was no chance of a reprieve. "It has been very distressing and frustrating for everyone," he said.

Clinics should have been given another 12 months to get in touch with couples with embryos in storage, he added. He said phone calls from anxious "parents" around the world were received hours before the midnight deadline expired.

The head of Cambridge's Bourn Hall Clinic, where as many 900 embryos were being destroyed, spoke of his dismay at the legal necessity of the process.

Peter Brinsden, medical director, said: "I do not feel good about allowing one embryo to perish without a patient's permission, let alone 800 or so."

Clinic staff had checked the morning post and faxes for last minute requests before starting the process at 8am. It was expected to last two days.

More than half the embryos came from people living in 60 different countries. Trying to get in touch with these patients had proved very difficult.

Dr Brinsden added that embryos were destroyed every day. However, yesterday was unique in that so many were being disposed of in one go and without the express permission of the couples involved.



Life on ice... Alison Hunter of the Nurture IVF clinic at Nottingham, with an embryo sample frozen in liquid nitrogen

News in brief

Boy hurt by blast on 'unfenced MoD land'

THE parents of a teenage boy criticised the army yesterday after he was injured by an explosive device on a military training range in Cornwall.

Colin and Gill Richardson, from Belmont, Durham, condemned the "woefully inadequate" warning signs and claimed Simon, aged 14, would not have been hurt had the area been fenced. He is in a stable condition in hospital after suffering 10 per cent facial burns from an exploding thunder flash.

The army began an inquiry into the incident, which happened on Wednesday after Simon picked up the device, used in training to simulate a grenade, on Ministry of Defence land near the training camp at Penhale, Perranporth. He took it back to the nearby Perran Sands holiday centre, where he was on holiday with his parents, 12-year-old sister Joanne and eight-year-old brother Adam, and a friend.

Mr Richardson said his son had gone exploring sand dunes by the holiday site, then went on to unfenced MoD property posted with danger signs in "peeling" paint. He said the signs did not warn of any live objects which would "blow up and take your face off".

Lorry kills AA patrolman

AN AA mechanic and a lorry driver died on a motorway hard shoulder late on Wednesday night in an accident the organisation described as every patrolman's nightmare.

The lorry ploughed into a car John Jones was repairing on the northbound carriageway of the M40 near Gaydon, Warwickshire, Warwickshire police said. The car driver was seriously ill in hospital yesterday.

AA spokesman Simon Wooding said Mr Jones had answered a routine call-out to a breakdown about 11.15-11.30pm. "I'm sure that if you asked all patrolmen out there what their greatest concern was, it would be an unfortunate incident just as this one was."

Mr Jones, who was married with two children, operated in the Leamington Spa area of Warwickshire and had been with the AA since 1991.

Suffering for science

TWO researchers have suffered severe pain to produce the definitive advice on how to deal with a bee sting — get it out as quickly as possible.

Tradition has it that a bee sting should be scraped off, never pinched out, but Kirk Visscher and Richard Vetter say this is likely to slow down removal of the barb.

The entomologists, from the University of California, exposed themselves to 20 bee stings each on the forearm. Reporting their findings in the *Lancet*, they say stings have a piston and valve attached to a venom sac, and the longer they are left in the skin, the more venom is pumped in.

However, with African bees, which can be deadly and attack on large numbers, the researchers say it is more important to escape than worry about removing their stings.

Appeal hope for murderers

TWO men serving life sentences for six murders in the Glasgow "ice-cream wars" yesterday had their cases referred to the High Court as the first step to a possible appeal. Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, has granted applications from Thomas Campbell and Joseph Steele to allow judges to review the cases to decide whether there should be an appeal against conviction.

Campbell and Steele received life sentences in 1984 for the murders of six members of the Doyle family by setting fire to their home in Ruchazie, Glasgow. An 18-month old baby was among the dead. The deaths were thought to be part of a vicious feud between gangs of Glasgow criminals fighting for control of ice cream van routes which it was said were being used for selling drugs.

Campbell and Steele lost their appeals against conviction in 1985 but have continued to protest their innocence. Campbell's previous application to appeal was dismissed by the then secretary of state in 1990.

BBC and CNN raise stakes

A NEW phase of the global news battle between CNN and the BBC began yesterday. BBC World, the 24-hour news and information channel, is to launch in Latin America in the autumn, making it available in an additional 45 countries. Ted Turner's Atlanta-based news network, CNN International (CNNI), unveiled programmes to revolutionise its rolling news format with a British presenter.

BBC World, which is facing an uphill struggle to challenge CNN's international supremacy, will be available in Venezuela, Brazil and Mexico from next month, and across most of Latin America and the Caribbean by spring 1997, bringing the number of countries it serves to 156. — *Andrew Culf*

Getty helps painting appeal

THE tycoon John Paul Getty II has donated \$50,000 to an appeal set up to stop a painting going to the Getty Museum in California, which is named after his father.

The money will help finance a \$2.04 million appeal set up by the National Galleries of Scotland to buy *Emma*. Finding the *Wounded Tancréd*, a masterpiece by the Italian artist Il Guercino. It is the second time that Mr Getty has intervened to prevent a work of art going to the Getty Museum. In 1994 he contributed \$1 million to keep Canova's statue *The Three Graces* in Britain.

But Mr Getty almost withdrew that donation after *Thomasoby Clifford*, director of the National Galleries of Scotland, suggested that his generosity was motivated by a grudge against his father — a suggestion for which Mr Clifford subsequently apologised publicly.

Mr Getty's latest donation was announced today as the painting — which is currently owned by the Howard family of Castle Howard in Yorkshire — went on show at the National Gallery in Edinburgh.

UK 'fire brigade' force ready

BRITAIN'S rapid deployment force, the military "fire brigade" which will be first into action in any future crises like Bosnia or the Gulf war, was yesterday declared fully operational. With a headquarters in a bunker at Northwood, near London, the force is built round the marine commando brigade and the army's airborne brigade, with its paratroopers. Other units with heavier equipment such as tanks can be attached as required. The new force will take responsibility for providing a "spearhead" infantry battalion at 24 hours' notice — for example to reinforce the troops in Northern Ireland — and a battalion group for Nato's multinational mobile reaction force. — *David Fairhall*

Legal action forces health authorities to withdraw blanket bans on sex-change surgery

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

HEALTH authorities are withdrawing blanket bans on funding sex-change surgery in the face of threats by transsexuals to take them to court.

In the latest case, Gloucestershire health authority has agreed to pay around £7,000

for a former labourer in her mid-30s, who has lived as a woman for four years, to have the operation in Brighton. The transsexual, named only as W in court papers, suffered psychological trauma through believing she was in the wrong body, became an alcoholic and was unable to work.

In four other cases, health authorities have agreed to

reconsider bans on gender surgery after solicitors acting for the transsexuals threatened judicial review or won leave to take the case to court. W's solicitor, Madeleine Rees, said: "They obviously don't want these cases to go to court because they're not sure they'll win."

In W's case, the High Court granted leave in June and ordered the case to be expedited

after her counsel, Stephanie Harrison, told the court W's sexual identity dilemma had almost driven her to suicide and she was having thoughts of self-mutilation.

Her lawyers argued that blanket bans offended against a cardinal rule of judicial review, that public bodies must not fetter their discretion. Bans were "irrational and unreasonable", and

breached the Sex Discrimination Act and European law.

As part of NHS rationing, many authorities announced they would no longer pay for sex-change operations, although they continue to treat transsexuals with hormones and counselling. Gloucestershire told W it was a policy not to pay for such surgery because of financial constraints and because it did not

have a sufficiently high priority.

Ms Rees said: "Informed medical opinion says transsexualism is a medical condition. The only treatment is surgery. One authority has agreed to pay for surgery for a male-to-female transsexual, but is refusing to pay for the more complex and expensive female-to-male operation."

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Colin Firth as Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*

ITV steals BBC clothes in search for classic success

Andrew Culf
Media Correspondent

ITV has stolen the BBC's clothes in the race to produce the next classic television costume drama hit. Plans by the corporation to adapt Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* have been put on hold, because its commercial rival had already decided to produce a 120 minute film version of the novel.

ITV has been so impressed by the success of the BBC's period dramas — particularly the audiences of 10 million for *Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice* — that it has embarked on a series of classical adaptations. The BBC had lined up the *Pride and Prejudice* production team of Andrew Davies and Sue Birtwistle to produce *Jane Eyre*, before discovering ITV had got in first.

London Weekend Television is expected to begin filming its version of *Jane Eyre* in September, with the screenplay by Kay Mellor, the writer of ITV's gritty prostitute drama *Band of Gold*. ITV has already snatched the Davies/Birtwistle team to produce *Jane Austen's Emma* for its autumn schedule and is to screen a bodice-ripping adaptation of *Moll Flanders* before Christmas.

A BBC spokesman said: "Jane Eyre is on our development list, but we have decided not to do it straight away. It would not serve the interests of the audience to have two versions at the same time."

But the BBC still intends to develop a six-part adaptation in two or three years' time.

The BBC denied the delay was a setback for its drama department. "We have a £10 million adaptation of *Rhodes* and *Anne Brontë's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* lined up for autumn," said a spokesman.

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Unpaid builders sue Kremlin

As Russia's debt crisis deepens, construction workers are bringing the protests home. James Meek in Moscow reports

DISGRUNTLED builders are pushing the Russian internal debt crisis to the very centre of political power by suing the Kremlin for £25 million for a lavish programme of presidential reconstruction work inside the fortress.

With Boris Yeltsin's inauguration ceremony only a week away, the deputy mayor of Moscow, Vladimir Resin, said that Mospromstroi — a commercialised construction branch of the city authority — was taking the presidential administration to court because it owed 202 billion roubles for the work.

While the government's empty treasury leaves wages and bills unpaid, despite Mr Yeltsin's pre-election promises, relatively prosperous Moscow had seemed far from the strikes and energy black-outs elsewhere.

But Mr Resin told *Sveodnya* newspaper that Moscow builders were owed a total of 1,000 billion roubles (£120 million) by different federal agencies.

Among the unpaid bills was one for the reconstruction of the hospital in the southern Russian town of Budyonovsk which was wrecked in fighting between Chechen hostage-takers and Russian special forces last year.

The new hospital enabled Mr Yeltsin, seen as responsible for the Chechen conflict, to look to residents in the eye when he visited the town on an election campaign trip. A spokesman for Mr Resin, Gennady Makarov, told the *Guardian*: "It's a fact they aren't paying up. The problem's chronic. They didn't pay for Poklonnaya Gora [a war memorial complex] for a long time, then in the end they paid but there was another one they hadn't paid for. They move the debt from one project to another."

Parts of the Kremlin are open to the public. But recent reconstruction work has focused on the buildings reserved for state functions and the presidential apparatus.

Plans were announced last year for restoring furniture and fittings dating from the tsars and making the president's quarters more spacious and comfortable than those of French or United States presidents.

In the far east, hunger strikes and other protests continued this week against the non-payment of thousands of miners and energy workers and fuel bills, which recently led to power cuts throughout the region. As miners claimed that they had still not received money promised by the gov-

ernment, Interfax news agency reported that nine children from the mining village of Tavrichanok had been taken to hospital with food poisoning after they caught and ate a stray dog. Their parents were said to have been unpaid since February.

Miners in the Arctic city of Verkhaya said they are on the point of striking over pay and conditions, and a trade union official said the miners' unrest in the far east had spread to the south, where 17 of the 24 pits in the Rostov region were on strike and the remainder were making no deliveries.

"I can tell you a figure which might make you realise how bad the situation is," Ruben Badalov, deputy head of the Independent Trade Union of Coal Industry Workers, said yesterday. "The total amount owed in back wages is 2 trillion roubles (£251 million). There is a very high probability of an all-Russian strike."

In Samara on the Volga, meanwhile, 5,000 workers from the Tupolev passenger jet plant threatened to block railway lines unless they received back-pay from January.

The daily labour newspaper *Trud* gave a poignant example of the non-payments crisis. It reported that a female medical worker had passed

out on a far-eastern railway track two days ago. When she came to, she said she had not been paid in four months and her husband, a miner at Amurskaya pit, had not been paid in five months. Her two sons were starving.

"The train drivers collected money for her, as much as they could, and gave it to the woman," *Trud* said.

The economics minister, Yevgeny Yasin, said Wednesday that government tax collection had to be improved within four months to enable budgeted payouts to be made if industrial unrest were not to spread.

Mr Yasin said post-election Russia resembled a "landscape after battle: many victims are left lying on the field".

He added: "The state cannot exist if it does not gather taxes. The state cannot carry out any policy if it does not have money. With market reform, with the freeing of industry, industry has made its own money. People just keep the responsibilities which go with that freedom."

Even if every Russian enterprise conscientiously paid its taxes, the country would still face an enormous internal debt problem, since many unpaid bills are between supposedly commercial enterprises, and are not owed by the state.



'Shuttle traders', who account for 15 per cent of Russian imports, operate beneath a statue of Lenin near Moscow's Luzhnik stadium. Yesterday, customs duties were raised to recoup lost tax revenues. PHOTOGRAPH BY SERGEI VETERNIN

Dawn raiders seize Chechens

Reuter in Dolinskoye, Russia

CCHECHEN villagers gave horrific accounts of a dawn helicopter raid yesterday by masked men who shot dead two, kidnapped 18 and left two more to die from shock. They join the Chechen government in blaming Russian troops.

man, was asleep when masked men broke the door down, his mother said.

"His wife grabbed him, but they said they would shoot the children if [the family] didn't let him go," she said, tracing bullet holes in the wall of her flat.

Zuza Nagayev, whose wall was also peppered with bullet holes, said: "I cried at them not to shoot, but they did any-

way. I hid my boy behind the carpet."

Neighbours said Mrs Nagayev's husband was among 18 men taken away by the raiders. They said two others were shot dead.

Atlanta media take law into their own hands

San Katz in New York

YESTERDAY'S newspaper pictures of Richard Jewell, the security guard suspected of the Olympic bombing, showed him peering from behind what appeared to be prison bars.

In fact the bars were the balusters of a staircase outside his mother's Atlanta flat. But the image was fitting enough for the portly 33-year-old has already been all but convicted by the media of planting the bomb that killed one woman and injured more than 100 people last Saturday.

A photograph of Mr Jewell posing in military fatigues with an M16 rifle was also reproduced in several newspapers. Criminologists held forth on television about a "hero syndrome", in which law enforcement officers commit crimes to draw attention to themselves.

As agents removed evidence from his home on Wednesday, there were television reports that masonry nails "consistent" with those in the Olympic bomb had been found.

One reporter, asked by his anchor about the significance of a roll of masking tape removed from the scene, blithely replied that it might have been used to bind together the pipes used in the explosive device.

Yesterday the FBI's director, Louis Freeh, dampened the frenzied speculation about Mr Jewell when he told a Senate committee that his agents were looking at "a number of suspects".

But he sounded as though he was trying to shut the stable door long after the horse had bolted. Whoever is proved to have planted the Atlanta bomb, Mr Jewell will be remembered as the hero who became the prime suspect.

By yesterday, as the small army of reporters outside his flat began to thin out, Mr Jewell's overnight propulsion into notoriety was beginning to raise uncomfortable questions about media coverage of criminal investigations in the United States.

The FBI's suspicions about local news coverage were particularly newsworthy because he had earlier been praised for spotting the Centennial Park

bomb and helping to evacuate the area. He had given several interviews, recounting his heroics.

Were television stations and newspapers right to name him as a suspect long before the FBI searched his home? Why did unnamed "investigation sources" help to turn the spotlight of the world's media on him?

"Whoever the bum was that leaked that Richard Jewell was the focus of the investigation deserves to be prosecuted," said his lawyer, Watson Bryant. "I don't know how anyone can withstand the scrutiny that he has had."

Mr Bryant's outrage reflected a naivety about the intensely close relationship in the US between law enforcement officials and the media.

Although the police usually wait until they are about to make an arrest before inviting the cameras in, Ameri-

'I don't know how anyone can withstand the scrutiny he's had'

cans are used to seeing men and women led handcuffed from their homes in the glare of television lights before they have been charged.

In April FBI agents had to bring forward their raid on the Montana cabin of the man they suspected of being the Unabomber because a television network was about to name Theodore Kaczynski as the prime suspect.

Though they are apt to put freedom of speech before the rights of suspects, news executives sounded uncomfortable yesterday as they justified the coverage of Mr Jewell.

"The information was out there," said Rochelle Bozman, the assistant metropolitan editor of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, which produced a special afternoon edition on Tuesday naming Mr Jewell as the prime suspect.

"If the Atlanta police department knows about it, local TV stations know about it, and we're going to be sitting here with egg on our faces."

Elysée rivals break bread but not ice

Paul Taylor in Paris

CAMERAS were not allowed to record the reconciliation lunch at the Elysée to which Jacques Chirac invited his defeated fellow Gaullist presidential rival, Edouard Balladur yesterday.

While the two may have broken bread, they are unlikely to have broken the ice. "The mouth," one presidential aide joked, when asked why photographers were excluded from their first private meeting since the election.

President Chirac's supporters accused Mr Balladur, the former finance minister and adviser he made prime minister in 1993, of betraying a "30-year friend" by running against him. But Mr Chirac is anxious to reunite his fractious centre-right coalition in good time for the 1998 general election.

After a year in the wilderness since Mr Chirac's victory in May 1995, Mr Balladur has called for bolder cuts in taxes, public spending and interest rates.

The president's office said the atmosphere at the 90-minute lunch was "very cordial" and the two conservative politicians discussed a range of domestic and foreign issues.

Mr Chirac's spokesman said Mr Balladur to his car and they shook hands, but made no statement. — Reuter.

News in brief

Bomb suspect released

Huda Fudeh, an Israeli-Arab woman from Acre held for nine days on suspicion of involvement in two bombings of Jewish targets in London in 1994, was released yesterday, Israeli officials said.

The police said they had found no evidence against her. An angry Ms Fudeh said the investigation could have been completed in a day. — Reuter.

Germ success

Japanese scientists examining a germ which has killed seven and made more than 9,000 people ill have identified three strains of the O-157 bacteria but have still to pinpoint the source, health ministry officials said yesterday. — Reuter.

Beyond the grave

The Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktaş, said yesterday that the Greek Cypriot government had agreed to hand over the remains of his mother, whose grave in the south of the island is out of bounds to him. — Reuter.

Sticking point

An impotence clinic's advert featuring a picture of New Zealand's 1928 Olympic athlete Stan Lay holding a "limp" javelin has outraged him and his family. The country's oldest living male Olympian said the doctor's advert was used without his permission. — AP.

Greeks get angry as tourists chip away stone forest

Helena Smith on Lesbos

THE fossilised forest of Lesbos has survived relatively unscathed for the last 200 million years, but its future now looks increasingly fragile as it suffers the ravages of the marauding modern tourist.

In recent years the great stone trunks on the western side of this Aegean island have been disappearing at a rate that has sent geologists into paroxysms of fury.

"It is one of the most im-

portant natural sites in Europe and represents a fossil forest which exists nowhere in the world," says Professor Evangelos Ventzelos, who teaches palaeontology at the University of Athens. "But it is literally being destroyed before our eyes. People just keep stealing it. My own office is full of stolen pieces of stone which have sent me."

In 1985 the Greek government passed emergency legislation declaring the area a protected natural site and holding out the possibility of a six month jail term for anyone walking away with

parts of the pre-historic stony forest. But the law appears to have done little to keep the trunks safe. With their ornate markings and extraordinary array of colours, the petrified trees and fossil plants have proved hard for visitors to resist.

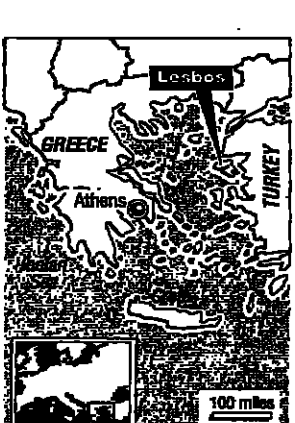
Although the forest, which was buried under volcanic ash before rainwater unscathed it, has been guarded around the clock and protected by iron fences since 1984, scientists say it is still vanishing at a frightening pace.

"There have been cases where people have been caught driving away with truckloads of the trees," says Nikos Zouras, a local geologist who has spent many years studying the wood. "They either want them as souvenirs or they sell them to museums or jewellers. If we hadn't taken protective measures, it's clear the park would not have survived at all."

Last week Dr Zouras began a lecture tour of villages and hilltop towns on the island in an effort to raise local awareness of the forest's value as an insight

into the conditions which prevailed when the trees were growing. For years, resident ecologists claim, locals have regarded the trees, which are up to 65ft tall, as little more than "old stones", often using bits of them as doorsteps in their homes.

Such is the current concern, scientists are lobbying hard for the area to become a recognised United Nations site. "That way we will not only have more money for research, but the state will have to properly enforce the law that it passed," says Dr Zouras.

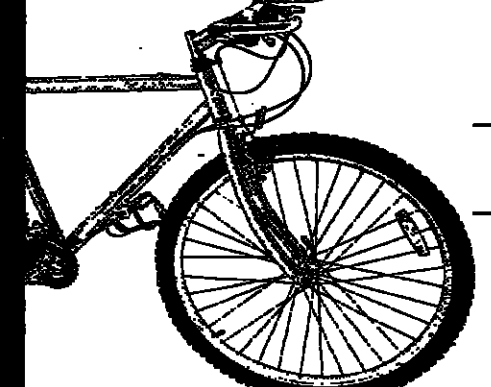


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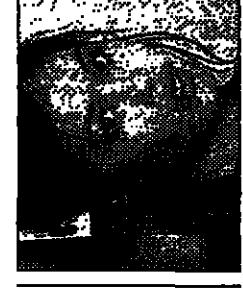
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مكتبة القرآن

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Music page 6



Books page 8



Hollywood knives: Mark Lawson on Ben Elton's novel

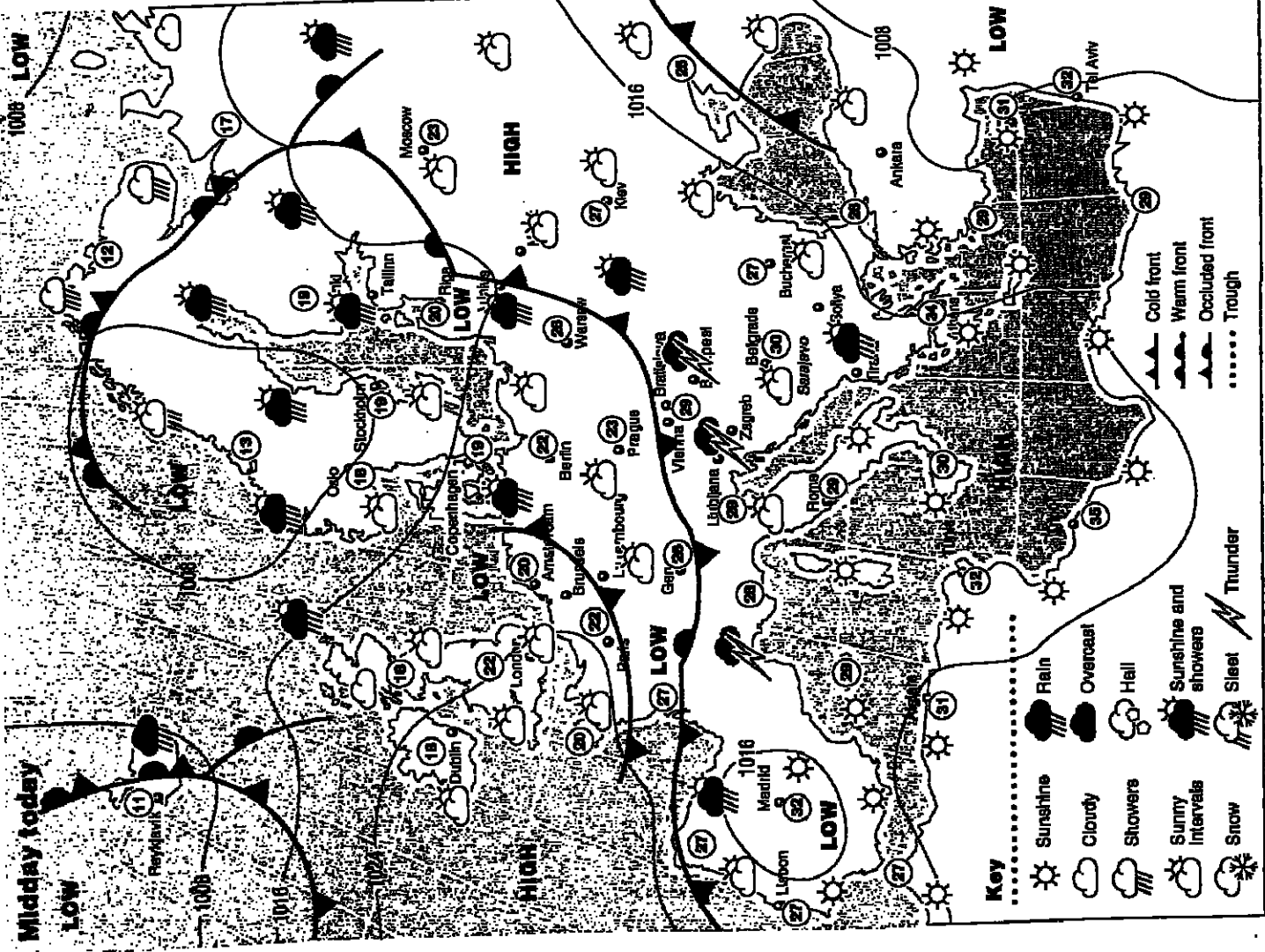
Edinburgh pages 2-5

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12 Weather/Television

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

Table with 2 columns: City and Weather forecast details.

Around the world

Table with 2 columns: City and weather forecast details.

European weather outlook

Most areas will be either cool and overcast or with a mix of sun and showers.

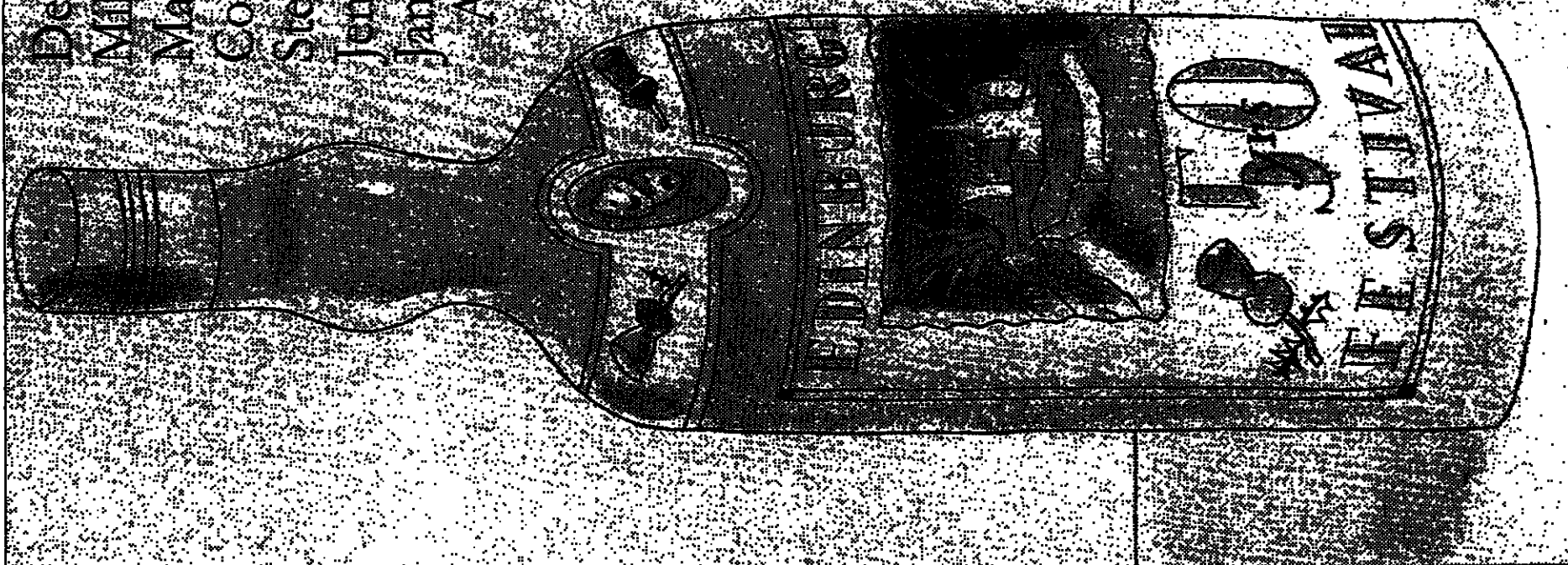
Television and Radio

7:00pm: Football. 7:00pm: The Changing Image of the World. 7:30pm: Sports.

Friday August 2 1986

The Guardian International REVEW

Barak Jacoby, Royan Arkkinson, Jonathan Miller, David Frost, Alan Bennett, Martha Graham, Margot Fonteyne, Steve Coogan, Emma Thompson, Lee Evans, Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, Tom Stoppard, Jenny Esler, Deborah Warner, James MacMillan, Brian de Palma, Alec McCowen, Mark Anthony Turnage, Martin Scorsese, What do they have in common? They were discovered at the festival.



Happy birthday Edinburgh!

Vertical text on the right side of the main advertisement, possibly a phone number or contact info.

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2 | Edinburgh

The Edinburgh Festival is in Scotland. But how much Scotland is there in the Edinburgh Festival? Michael Billington and a team of Guardian critics look back at 50 years of the good, the bad and the brilliant

A fringe affair with Scotland

OOD was rationed, hotels still had their windows boarded out. It took numerous letters and telegrams to persuade the Ministry of Puff to let the lantern on the book-lighting of the castle. In 1947, the Edinburgh Festival symbolised peace and unity. In a world still struggling to recover from war, audiences gratefully flocked to the Victoria Hall to Glendora's middle-class Mrs. Moore and Verity to come to see her in *Madame X*. I mean, I know that the festival must have seemed, back then, like a beacon of hope and an expression of Britishness in a grim, austere world. How do things stand now?

As the festival faces its 50th birthday, the element of spiritual fervour might be thought to have waned. But Edinburgh still offers an omnivorous high-class mix of the best in music, opera, drama and dance. Brian McMaster, the director since 1982, says: "The fundamental thing is that the character of each particular festival depends on subjective taste and taste you have about the inclinations of the director. McMaster's own achievement is to have thrown a sharp line between the festival and the fringe, to have restored the music programme to something of its former glory, to have compensated for the national lack of foreign theatre and to have made the festival more eclectic. That last point is crucial. McMaster has realised that audiences now want more than a three-week waltz in a cultural foam-bath. His programme this year starts with a lecture by George Steiner and includes a wide range of background talks and conversations with artists. In 1997 audiences were hungry for ecstasy, now they crave enlightenment as well. By



Edinburgh's success has been a mix of the old and the new. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe, which began in 1947, has become a major part of the festival. It offers a wide range of performances, from traditional Scottish music to contemporary dance. The festival also attracts international artists and audiences, making it a truly global event. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is a testament to the city's rich cultural heritage and its ability to embrace new and diverse forms of art.

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That Edinburgh feeling: critics' best and worst

Music

Edward Greenfield
MY GREAT memory of the Edinburgh Festival dates back to its very first year, 1947 and the day when, as a new National Serviceman, I went with other recruits in a truck to a legendary concert at the Decker Hall. Not only was Brynna Waller conducting, Malher's *Mad* was the first rendition of *Water* which he had been paired since Hitler's invasion of Austria, the Vienna Philharmonic. My most startling festival occasion was in the mad-frites when I joined the Guardian's then northern music critic, Colin Mason, for an usher's hall concert by Bartroll and the Halle Orchestra. I was still reeling from the experience that day of

Comedy

Rob Yates
By all accounts - particularly his own - Gerry Steady is not a very nice man. What's more, the Glaswegian comic makes it his business to abuse those who offer encouragement. However, at the risk of him turning up on the Guardian's doorstep, all I can say is that Gerry Steady is a great talent, and a great talent he is. Eighties Edinburgh parlor-

Dance

Mary Clark
In 1964 there was the revolution of Margaret Fontoyne's first Fringed revival of Michael Folkner's great ballet, originally staged by Diaghilev in Paris in 1910. In

The Guardian Friday August 2 1996

1988, McMaster hopes to open a brand-new Festival Centre in the Royal Mile that will embrace lectures, discussions, bookshops and a clubroom, offering the city a year-round facility.

McMaster, whose contract has been extended to 2001, says the festival will change depending on who is running it but adds: "I like to think that the programme for the 100th Festival will not be that different from the more starting it seems. It ignores the fact that by 2047 (or long before) Scotland may no longer be part of the Union. What effect would that have on the festival? What is noticeable is that the tension between the event's role as an international festival and as a focus for national self-expression has been running on for 50 years, almost as long, in fact, as the debate between elitism and populism. That much is clear from a new book, *The Edinburgh International Festival 1947-1996* by Eileen Miller (Scottish Press), which not only lists every single performance over the past 50 years but traces all the key, reprobations and crises that have attended this extraordinarily durable event. Right from the beginning, prominent Scots grumbled about the under-representation of Scottish music and drama: a point expressed in 1948 by Tyrone Guthrie's manager, the first production of *The Shaver of the 77th Regiment* in the Assembly Hall. But Hugh MacDiarmid fuelled the controversy in 1949 by arguing that Scotland, through the festival, had gained the world with the least effort on its own soil - and that imposing global culture on a small nation was the choice of a few to a cause of universal destruction.

I doubt that many nationalists today would endorse McMaster's thesis. The Scotsman's comment, even at the time James Beattie countered that, while being one of Scotland's glories as a poet, as a parliamentarian McMaster was "just plain dirt". And today Paul Scott, vice president of the SNP and president of the Scottish Society, calls the party line no different to dictate festival policy or influence the choice of what to perform. "It's no part of our plan," he says, "to make Scotland less international. Indeed, one of the reasons why we want Scotland to be independent is to take our part in the rest of the world, but some years ago there was a public conference to discuss the function of the festival and day and visible years in the area where it happened. It was a fraud. Broadly, we would agree with that. When we achieve independence, which could happen in the next decade, it's bound to increase the Scottish element in the festival. The rest of the world will become more curious about Scotland and local artists will demand an increased Scottish content." But what exactly does he have in mind? Scott points, with some pride, to the fact that in the Frank Dunlop years, from 1984 to 1991, the Scottish Society regularly presented programmes of Scottish poetry and song.

the same year at the College of Art, we saw Richard Buckler's great exhibition celebrating the achievements of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Many years later, in 1982, there was the Mark Morris Dance Group in Dido And Aeneas, in which, with "outrageous honesty" (Barishnikov's phrase), Morris danced both Dido and the Sorcerer. My worst experience was the second half of Michael Clark's *our cara phony H*, our *car phony H*, 1985, when a brilliant start degenerated into a costume parade for Clark and Matthew Hewitts decked out in frocks, wigs and high heels.

Lyn Gardner
1986, First Edinburgh. Eighty-two shows in 14 days. On the Perth-Award panel, Don't laugh all week until I see Theatre de Complicité's *More Bigger*. Samples Now. Launched so much in the Guardian's first Fringed follow judges that the show is eligible for award. It wins. You never to miss another festival.

Theatre

Derek Malcolm
Knocking At My Door: the first low-budget feature from Martin Scorsese, and recognised as later counteracted by the extraordinary Mean Streets.

Film

Walter
Trying, late one Saturday night, to stop a drunk beating up a woman just off Princes Street. Result: the woman, apparently, the wife, turned round and slapped me one with her handbag. Alternately interviewing Christopher Lambert on stage at the Edinburgh in front of 400-odd young women almost fainting with lust - not for me.

The Guardian Friday August 2 1996

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9 In a hold of (5)

10 Frequent (like a ghost) (5)

11 Phantom (5)

12 Fruit with loose nut (4)

13 Count - and recount (4)

14 Workshop (5)

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1 Ammonia-piled compound (9)

2 Obscenity (5)

3 Healer (4)

4 Uncertainty (5)

5 Hot and sultry (5)

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BY GARRY TRUDEAU

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Edinburgh 3

He also argues that there is a whole generation of Scottish dramatists, including James Bridie, Robert McLellan, Alexander Reid and Robert Kemp whose work deserves revival. Bridie aside, I am largely ignorant of their plays (though McCallum's *The Pipers of Edinburgh* is being given this year at the Piffichery Festival). But while such work should clearly form the backbone of the projected Scottish National Theatre, how far would it sit in an Edinburgh Festival? Even Iver Brown, a former drama critic of the Observer and a tough Scot, confessed himself baffled by the language when he sat through McCallum's *The Laird O' Forvie* on the Fringe of the first Festival. Paul Scott has, I suspect, a stronger case when he suggests a look at some of the 200 operas based on his namesake's *Waverley* novels.

But the nationalist issue is not going to go away and is likely to haunt the Edinburgh Festival in the future even more than in the past. Scotland boasts two first-rate composers in James MacMillan and Thomas Augustine Mathias, some excellent novelists in James Kelman, Irvine Welsh and Alan Sillitoe, lively poets such as Edwin Morgan, Tom Leonard and Liz Lochhead. Films such as *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* have also quickened interest in its history. But, for all the living Scottish playwright who has achieved international recognition, obviously Scotland should be represented in the Edinburgh Festival on a full-scale independence. I suspect the Festival will face a genuine, and possibly insoluble, problem: how to achieve expression of national identity without diluting the international appeal.

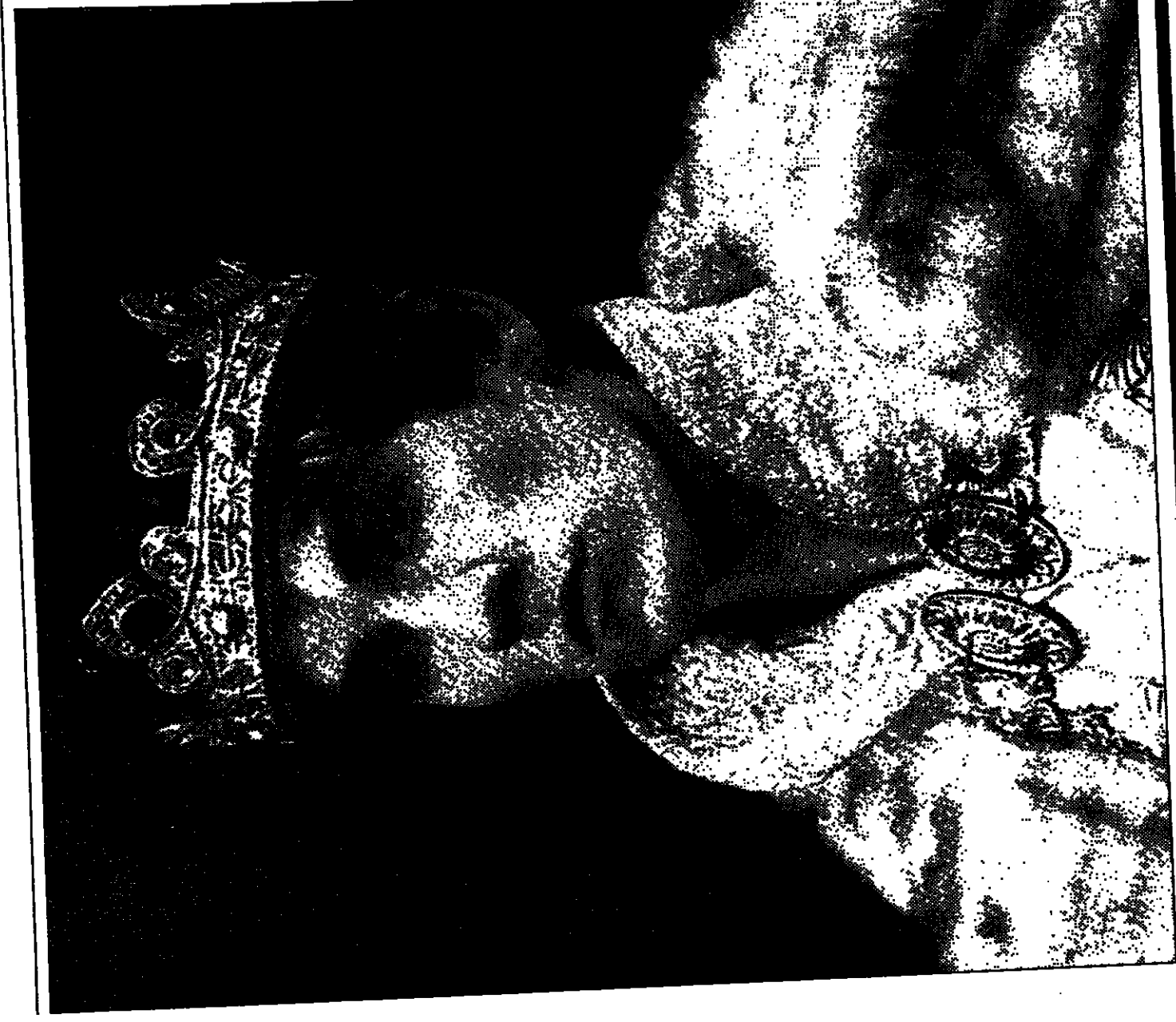
If Scottish nationalism is bound to affect the nature of the Festival too, or better or worse, is the charm, of the Fringe. Previous directors, such as John Drummond and Frank Dunlop, tried to bring aspects of it into the main Festival until, that is, Dunlop at a lunch in 1981 bluntly described the Fringe as "a minor and self-satisfied" and "reminiscent of a modern Tower of Babel of the arts". Motivation, however, takes a much cooler line. "My aim," he says, "was to distinguish clearly between the Festival and the Fringe. There are obvious differences between us. We programme: they don't. We have a structure: they have their own anarchic shape. Since I see the Fringe as a start, it's not for me to comment on it. But I would hate to see that anarchic defraction of the Fringe since it is a vital part of its attraction."

But didn't Dunlop have a point? Isn't there something self-satisfied about the way the Fringe each year gleefully announces it is bigger than ever? Is it also had anything to do with artistic quality? I have also read few siller statements than that by Hilary Strang, the Fringe Director, writing in this year's brochure, that "Not much has really changed over the years."

He had seen me on television in the Naked Civil Servant show. I didn't openly bless the crowd, but in my heart I thought of doing so.

Perhaps the festival was the beginning of Scotland's entry into the world. Now it has gone even further in that direction. It has become "gay". The movement is dear to the Scots and they have always believed in it. As that noble Scot Mr. M. M. Berric explained in *Never Tame*: "The white man uses the little girls and the little boys are the little girls and the little boys are the little girls."

So perhaps it is only natural that The Peace and Plenty Whisky Company should brew a whisky with my name and a photograph of me on the label. It is a good business manoeuvre, sending gay men spend all their waking hours in pubs in America. On the label is printed a quotation from Mr Burns: "Freedom and whisky gang the gither."



The Guardian Friday August 2 1986

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Towards equal opportunities

The Observer
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Promoting equal opportunities

Quentin Crisp: the Scots and I

A NA room of a house where I spent a large amount of time when I was a child, there hung on the wall an imposing group engraving. It showed a group of English hard sellout countenances, dressed in the most elaborate and costly of their copperplate type suits, printed the name of a shirt in Scotland by which these hairy heads were identified together with the words, "Like the people that roared them, terrible in anger and slow to forgive." I recognised that this state of mind was not at all unusual. It was a Scots and I thought my first idea of the Scots and I was a hostile to human habitant. I think the Welsh and the Scots have both a history of betrayal by the English. In spite of their self-congratulatory view of themselves as hon- trated centuries of dirty tricks, nations which they consider less than themselves. We need not go as far as India, where they tied up Indians natives in the muzzles of guns and blew them in pieces. I think I met many Scotsmen in London and found their opinion to be the natural counterparts of this superiority. We ascel look in



MARKED BY QUENTIN CRISP

Further than Scotland. All this coloured my attitude to the Scots when I visited their country again recently. I kept in my hand (metaphorically - I have found that, if I don't wear a large black hat on my head, I am unrecognisable to the public) and, as I stepped from the plane, said: "I did not mean that unpleasantness at Glencoe. I'm great warm over me." I was greeted warmly during the Edinburgh Festival of 1976. That I was invited to go there does not show any particular attitude towards me or what I have come to represent, because I was a tiny part of a troupe of strolling players who came from Bristol University department led by a man who was, I think, named Andy Jordan.

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A fringe affair with Scotland

Page 3 50 years of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe... In fact, everything has changed. In 1947, six theatre companies created an unofficial Fringe... the Edinburgh Fringe is now an international bonanza.

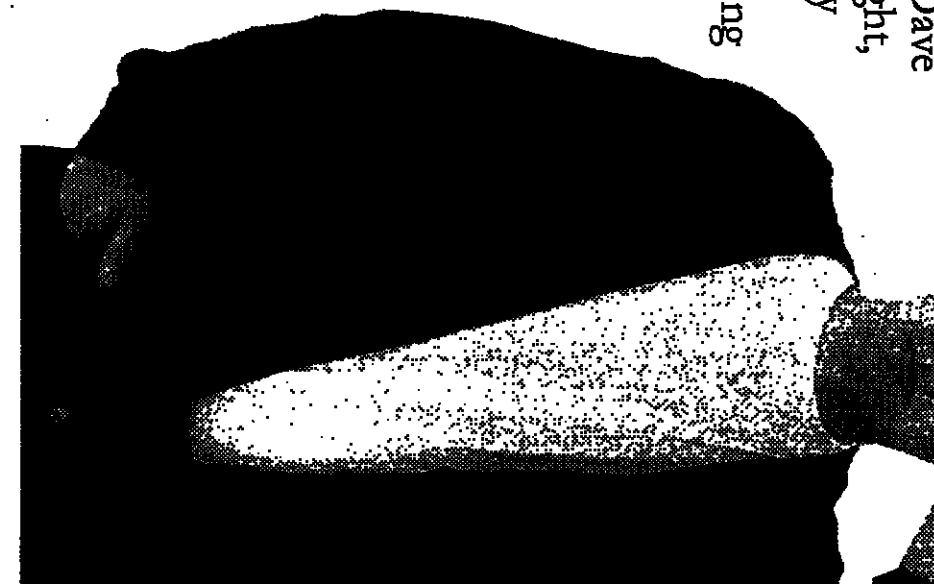


Plowley talks Peggy Ashcroft in the 1969 production of Women From Chelsea to Dylan Thomas

It wasn't even this first went to Edinburgh in 1947... as both paying customer and student critic, and... I saw a couple of Oxford Theatre company...

The 50th festival promises to be a golden one.

Comedian Dave Gorman, right, explains why every self-respecting comic will be there. Plus the shows that will be the talk of the town



The Guardian Friday August 2 1996

Buñuel, Welles, Cocteau... then there's the new stuff

Film Jonathan Romney... F THERS is one thing guaranteed to set the pulses racing in a film festival programme...

Of the new films, a rich British crop includes the uncompromising anti-heroic movie... Buñuel, Welles, Cocteau... then there's the new stuff

Liberation from the lairds

Who Owns Scotland? 237pp, Corgi, £25... Who Owns Scotland Now? by Angus Craib

Scotts generally feel sore about the land. This is broadly an atheistic lit-... The Maclintock's time may be coming again.



Bringing home a bag on the North Harris, Lewis and Harris... PROLOGUE: GLEN SHANLEY

In a no-blame culture In Hollywood — and indeed on only one subject: the relationship between screen violence and street violence... The Maclintock's time may be coming again.



Edinburgh 15

Just not the case because we know that almost all TV people have no sense of humour whatsoever. I say 'almost all' because there are exceptions. I don't know who they are yet, but when they buy me a drink, I'm sure they will be only too happy to believe I meant them all along.

And there I go. I'm in my own living room, tapping away at a word processor and I'm schmoozing an as yet un-noticed producer. My agent would be proud of me. But then they tell me the only chance I get this year. They are after all, hundreds of schmoozers and we might all head north full of intent but most of us won't get the opportunity. They go to the Glided Ballroom bar at 'Lato the Club' or hanging around in the Pleasance courtyard of an evening. You'll see schmoozers in little black gowns, some with how the hell I don't come their way. Then they'll get drunk, give up and go home. And I'll be one of them. I did it last year. I'll do it again this year and probably next, though. I just want to sample that special festival atmosphere, stretch myself, because I like going to watch experimental dance... anything further my career? Why? Because ambition is an ugly word. Well let me introduce you to its even uglier cousin, whom it keeps locked in the cellar for fear of embarrassment: network and schmooze.

Schmoozing: being polite to someone who buys me a drink (on their ample expense account) in the hope that they will one day want to employ me. It might sound shallow. But it's too easy to sneer. Because to be honest with you, I'd happily be polite to someone who buys me a drink in the more modest hope that they will one day want to buy me another. I can't see what's wrong with valuing my rights a little.

But in recent years it has become an increasingly regular complaint that comedy has somehow sold its soul; that it's been taken over by big business. Apparently, writing now conscientiously and ignoring the people that appeal to television producers is a crime. But this is not the punter. But this is not the other-worldly sense of humour not shared by you or I. Of course, we know that's

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motor show, and that new gag about Michael Bolton's barber is twin airbag. Most comedians don't make money out of the things. In fact, unless you're an established TV name, you're looking to take a pretty hefty loss. Well, I for one can't afford that kind of holiday - I I don't think I would be in Edinburgh. I'd be on holiday. Don't get me wrong I do enjoy the festival, but I'm going there because I think it might just help to further my career. There, I've said it. I feel better now it's out in the open. I don't think you're supposed to have told you that. I'm supposed to tell you that I'm taking a show up because I love

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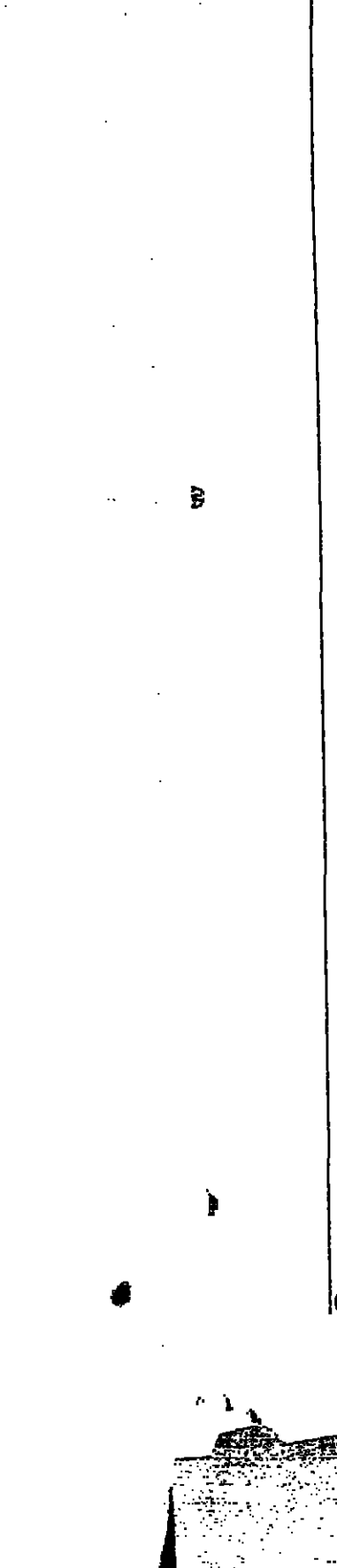
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The Edinburgh Festival is the comedy equivalent of the Motor Show



NA laboratory, somewhere in California, three scientists are monitoring seismic activity across the globe. It appears that a small earthquake, then they check their Stephen Hawking calendar (A Brief History of 1986 - 26.09 from all good stations) and, seeing their hero set on a wheelchair, friendly beach the other guy's shoulder in case "the man from Anglia TV who's looking for a new face to present a five minutes slot about fly fishing" obviously reacting to the laughter caused by several life's little idiosyncrasies. In Edinburgh is about selling your wares. It's the biggest shop window there is. It's the comedy equivalent of the

entrapment, not taking any notice of her. His song presumably draws out her cry. Only an angle notices her dimly gazing over his shoulder with calm inquiry at the punctured foot, the dropped flowers. People more often want to pronounce judgment on Orpheus's second loss of Eurydice, when he turns around to look at her before they have re-secured the day. Is he a victim of his own sensuality? Virgil describes him as seized by a loving frenzy that the underworld does not know how to pardon. Ovid thought he was afraid she might have fallen somehow to keep up with him - as if worried about her hinking skills. For the medieval allegorists, his U-turn was mere backsliding from pursuit of higher things. In our century the Imagist poet H. D. wife of Richard Aldington, spoke out against Orpheus's "rattlesnake" and "arrogance".

Nor has Eurydice been free from blame. Gluck's opera has her fall of mistrustful anxiety, worrying that he can't face her because she has lost her looks in Hades. "I would have been able to say to Orpheus," claimed the Russian writer Marina Tsvetayeva, "Don't look back!" His turning was... the result of either the blindness of her love, or of her impudence.

The hubbub of re-examination has gone on for centuries, but there has been nothing here for partisans of either side to consult. After all, of English word "respect" comes from the Latin for "to look back". Whichever of them forced the turn and had been letting or putting down the other. To look back is to recognize a dependency. Mothers and other beholders among humans and other primates do it repeatedly. As it grows, the child makes ever longer forays from its mother, but these adventures have the shape of loops, punctuated by glances back for reassurance.

What is true of the individual life is true too of the culture as it past, as we grow up towards our notions of enlightenment by revisiting what we once did ourselves in myth, adjusting our self-contentment with how far we've come by reflecting how far we've still have to go. "The backward look behind the assurance / Of recorded history, the backward half-loop / Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror" (T.S. Eliot).

Myths reassure our questions about what we really want. When it was younger, the Orpheus story pictured the bliss of control. It arose, perhaps, from something like the excitable chatter of a bunch of kids who have just had a big idea: "wouldn't it be great if, when you whistled, all the animals came running and did whatever you told them to?" "Terrific. But the thought strikes them that human beings are animals - would the whistle work on them? Now the myth appeals to older kids, to puberty with its clammy dreams of sexual magnetism. For all its fervours, such a world would seem demeaned, its servicable inhabitants less than people. This is the moment when imagination should acknowledge that Eurydice must die, die in order to show by her recalcitrance to Orpheus's desire that she is herself as real as he is. He must learn to be glad that he cannot call her tune.

Eric Griffiths is a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and author of *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry* (Oxford, 1989).

Love, loss and art: Teopip's Orpheus and Eurydice, on the ceiling of the Palazzo Scajola, Venice. Illustration: Alan Smeaton

only his hollow tortoise-shell lyre ("cava... testadine"), an accompaniment. Instead of a over and again in the ethereal clutches of bereavement, is "you" ("it"). This inducing of "it" from myrtle's later senses that human artistry arises from distress and immediate loss. The artist's power, such as it is, resides in the making of this second world. ("The Orpheus about persisting in this regard - Orpheus's head still sings after his own death. Our most truly Orphic writer is Beckett, whose voice went on for years after he gave up on it.)

Virgil's haunting echo would eventually harden into a dichotomy whereby the Australian poet Rilke - another devotee of Orpheus - was positive that every one discovers that artistic work and actual life somehow form an "either-or". Orpheus was occupied with this either-or when Eurydice met her death. Poussin's Land-scope with Orpheus and Eurydice (Louvre) shows him strumming the lyre, his eyes loathed to the sky.

Chlaim to fumes looked back when his wife Eurydice was following him out of the underworld, but being her for ever-loved, he had seen her in the light and had been with her again the twice-string guide).

Orpheus in literature: Jean Anouilh, Guillaume Apollinaire, John Ashbery, Margaret Atwood, Samuel Beckett, Robert Browning, Geoffrey Hill, Victor Hugo, Orpheus in Gluck's *Orpheus* and other re-imaginings: prototype of Chlaim, the "Good Shepherd" (Milton), the "Jean Cocteau" (Proust), Stalin's Russia (Orpheiades), Italy (Boccaccio), Austria (Kafka) and elsewhere. Death torn apart by delirious whirlwinds, was eventually washed up on the strand of Lesbos.

Writers from Virgil to Salman Rushdie have been gripped by the myth of Orpheus. With a new production of Gluck's Orfeo on its way to Edinburgh, Eric Griffiths explains why

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Orpheus: a glance in time

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Music

Music

Theatre

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Michael Billington

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Where else would you see Mark Morris in an opera?

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Two Roberts and a spot of Botho

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Music

Women who know the score

As a top European orchestra once again closes its doors on women, Stewart Collins applauds Britain's non-sexist approach

ALARGE public justification votes to continue the ban on the employment of women. One of the most vocal supporters of the ban is the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Maintaining a 100-year tradition, it has again confirmed that it will not be accepting women into its ranks or its files. They aren't good enough, they can't back it, and they certainly can't manage the heavy lifting.

But could it happen in Britain? No, it could not. In fact, nothing could be further from the realities of the musical scene. Put quite simply the news from Britain is all about the inexorable advance of womanhood.

Look at the music media. Whether you're talking about the *Classical FM Magazine*, the *BBC Music Magazine* or *Opera Now*, one glance at the shelves in WH Smith or Muzland and you will be confronted by a cover girl. Not Naomi Campbell or Claudia Schiffer, but one of the Venessa Mae/Cecilia Bartoli/Leonora MacGregor/Lesley Garrett crowd, alluringly and quite possibly scantily clad. From there to time one of those three tenors — the good, the bad or the ugly — might get a look in, but essentially the lions of classical music in this country are on one side of the gender divide. But does this phenomenon extend beyond the star system and into the broader body of music? It certainly does, and it is much more fundamental than a mere tight-behind-smile marketing ploy.

You needn't be too long in the foothold to remember the days when British orchestras were exclusively male-dominated ensembles, serviced by a handful of women in administrative support, tell coats and white table cloths and dominated from the podium by steadily formidable holders of the white stick. Old-fashioned as it all is, it is the fact of the matter that the general involvement of women in music is a reality that has been about this year 3 from it has been about the absence of women from the music scene. It is almost unthinkable that a woman should be seen on the podium of a symphony orchestra. Yet if there has been any outcry about this, it is a woman's right, not a woman's duty. Well, you want to know what will express it? Put their name to the news from

Britain is all about the inexorable advance of womanhood

womankind

that one, and of course you will still find those who swear blind that the reverse is true; there are obviously a lot of them in Vienna. But there must be a sneaking suspicion that this is the case, given the widespread and consistent experience of the modern orchestra.

Dr Janet Rittenmeyer, director of the Royal College of Music, is not having a marginal imbalance of the sexes in her current student population — 65/35 per cent in favour of women — feels that there might also be a "playground" phenomenon at work. Maybe it's no longer just boys to carry around a violin case — drum kit, electric guitar and sexy sax are OK, but string!

Another big player in the gender sea-change has to have been the gradual but significant emancipation of the workplace. Just as in many other walks of life, employers have increasingly made it possible for working mothers to enter the professions and, of course, the orchestras.

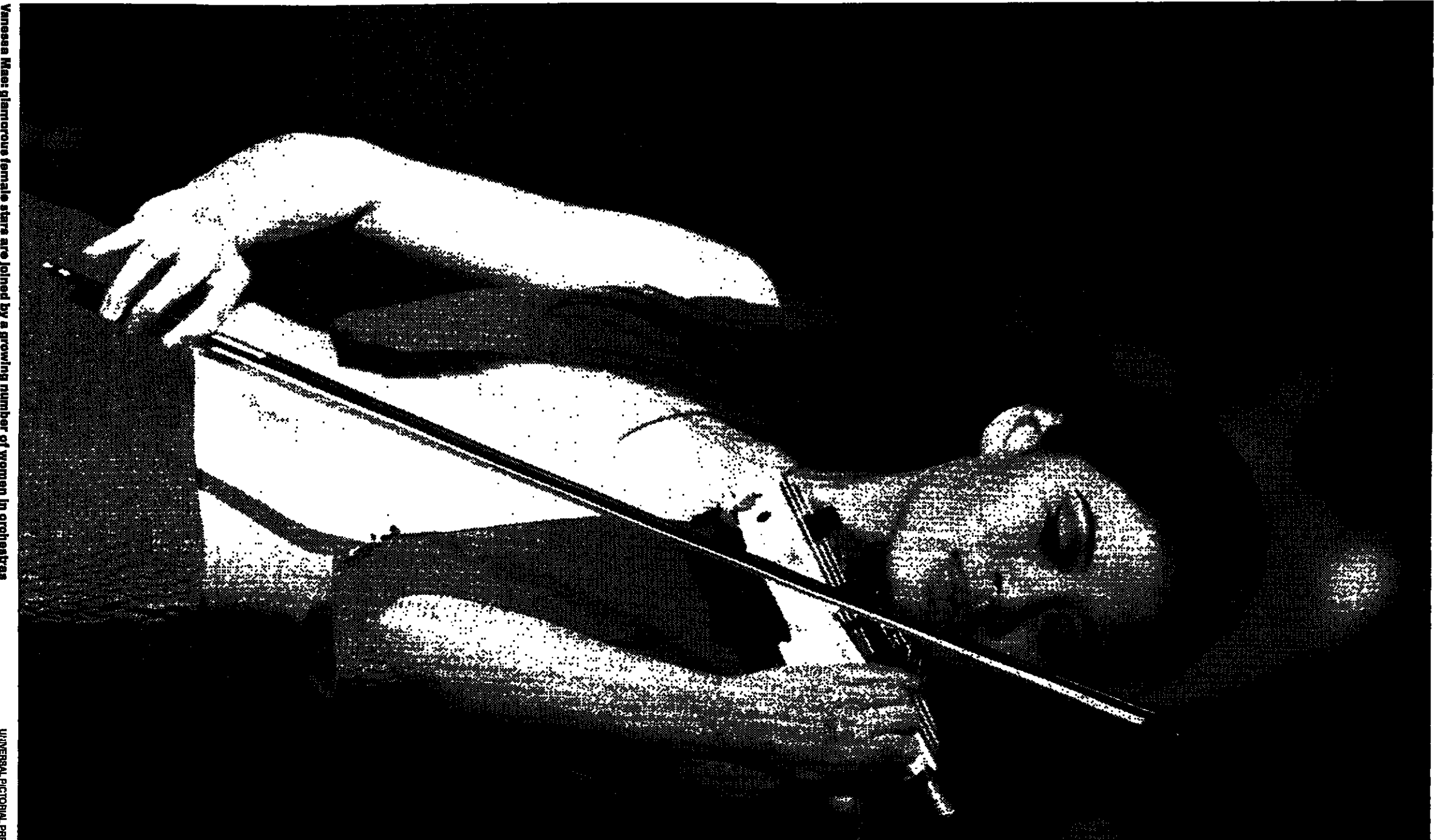
Shirley 21, for example, offers a niche to its players, while the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic employs a human resources director, Tanya Ingham, Women's side's "partner" for Women's scheme, the RLO actively pursued and pursued policies to ensure that any lingering discrimination was abolished. Accordingly, maternity (and paternity) leave was enhanced; although women have lapsed with childcare worries and other measures designed to ease women's way in the workplace.

But if these advances to women might be seen as benefits deriving from a caring, well-organized, then there have also been strikingly male markers highlighted in the whole gender shift.

In contrast with Shirley 21, a number of the other high-scoring orchestras identified in the ABC and very much up their players from the newly expanded rehearsal pool, the pool of "senior" self-employed workers. Obviously the desirability of self-employment can be more attractive to women, particularly when families and children are involved. The obvious, we are told, is the case with men, who value job security and permanent contracts.

The Guardian Friday August 2 1988

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Vanessa Mae's glamorous female stars are joined by a growing number of women in orchestras

Classical CD of the week: Sallinen

The Horseman
Sallinen/Valkonen/Erkkila/Valkonen/Serovollina
Opera/Söderström
(Finlandia PACD 101) (two CDs)
*** £28.99

The Red Line
Hynninen/Valkonen/Vinman/
Finnish National Opera/Kami
(Finlandia 1576-1028) (two CDs)
*** £28.99

AUS SALLINEN, 63 now, is firmly established as the leading Finnish opera composer, but very little of his work has been seen in Britain. In 1987 Covent Garden put on his third stage work, *The King Goes Forth To France*, but that, apart from a Sallinen's *Wells* production of *The Red Line* in the late 1970s, is all that has been seen here. There are five operas to date! *The Pallas* was premiered at the Stockholm Festival last year; the previous one, *Kullervo*, was commissioned to open the new national opera house in Helsinki in 1993. Now the first two, *The Horseman* and *The Red Line*, have just been released on CD in what might be regarded as definitive performances, recorded with the casts that created their roles in the first productions.

They make a shapely contrast. *The Horseman*, which won a national opera competition in Finland in 1978, has an epic sweep, a fondness for grand theatrical gestures and a slightly heavy-handed symbolism threaded through it by the poet. *Pavane* through it is dark, sometimes obscure, with more than a whiff of neo-romanticism, and explores the ambiguities of nationalism in a country that was part of the Swedish empire for 200 years and annexed by Russia after that. The main character, Finland's plight, is set in the house of a rich Russian and then escape back to Finland where he leads a revolt against the Swedes and is fatally wounded.

It is, of course, in a dequy, brooding sort of way, but there's no doubt that *The Red Line*, composed three years later, was musically and dramatically an enormous leap. It remains Sallinen's best opera and it is the work that really made his name and his reputation: the action is more tightly focused, the scenario more direct and less outwitted, and the score leaner and less self-contradictory. *The Red Line* is the story again has a strong nationalist overtone. It's set at the time of



the Russo-Finnish War at the beginning of this century, when the Russian grip was weakening and the Finnish people finally won utterance in the north of the country and the work charts their destination with the premises of the political story is grim and uncompromising. Through this wonderfully well characterized, full of seemingly word ideas, and Jorma Paavola's performance of the role of the orator Topi no does this is meretriciously powerful. There's no doubt *The Red Line* is the best place to begin with Sallinen.

Andrew Clements

This week's CD releases

- **** **Independent**
Sallinen/Valkonen/Erkkila/Valkonen/Serovollina
Opera/Söderström
(Finlandia PACD 101) (two CDs)
*** £28.99

- **** **Excellent**
Sallinen/Valkonen/Erkkila/Valkonen/Serovollina
Opera/Söderström
(Finlandia PACD 101) (two CDs)
*** £28.99

- **** **Good**
Sallinen/Valkonen/Erkkila/Valkonen/Serovollina
Opera/Söderström
(Finlandia PACD 101) (two CDs)
*** £28.99

British Cantatas I-IV
Raby/Raby/Chaplin/Raby/
Lloyd/Elmer/Bellamy/Delch/
(Collins Classics 1412)
*** £12.99

Beach Complete Cantatas Vol 3
Schlick/Von Magnus/Schul/
Agnew/Morris/Amsterdam
Hiroquois Orchestra & Choir/
Koyama
(Vox 089-143863) (three CDs)
*** £28.99

Masochist Cantatas
These two part cantatas appeared as a single set of three CDs in 1976; they are now reissued on two separate full-price CDs, which for 20-year-old recordings is a bit steep. (AC)

WITT the third installment of Tom Koopman's massive project (some 60 discs altogether) to record all of Bech's surviving church and secular cantatas, the first major milestone has been reached. Seven of the cantatas (Nos 54, 63, 105, 161, 162, 168 and 169) included here complete the survey of those Bech wrote up to 1717, when he left the Weimar court to work first in Coblenz and then from 1723 in Leipzig. Nos 22 and 23, also here, were the pieces that served as his audition for the Leipzig job. Despite their shared origins the selection is superbly varied, while the performance by Koopman and his hand-manned by the Leipzig Collegium Cantabile IV, setting of *Elaboration of the third cantata*, still holds the honours. *Bech's Cantatas* are a gem, and which was never performed again during his lifetime. It's curious, though, that the cantata itself is a wonderfully ingenious piece of vocal writing. (AC)

سكس الموالج

Leadership quarrels shake ANC

David Beresford
in Johannesburg

SOUTH Africa's African National Congress is being shaken by the most serious leadership squabbles since it came to power in the 1994 majority rule elections.

An extraordinary attack was made on its national leadership yesterday by a man recently sacked from the government for implicating an ANC cabinet minister in a seven-year-old bribery scandal.

General Bantu Holomisa, the former deputy minister of the environment and tourism, suggested that the ANC was in the pocket of the controversial casino boss, Sol Kerzner, who is at the centre of the long-running bribe scandal.

The row coincides with moves to dismiss an important regional premier, Patrick Lekota, in a provincial ANC power struggle which could have national repercussions.

Gen Holomisa launched his attack on the ANC leadership in response to the announcement that he is to face "charges" at a forthcoming disciplinary hearing. He is being accused of bringing the ANC into disrepute by alleging to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission — investigating political crimes of the apartheid era — that the present minister of public enterprises, Stella Sigcau, shared in a R2 million bribe Mr Kerzner paid to a bantustan leader in the 1980s for gambling rights in the Transkei.

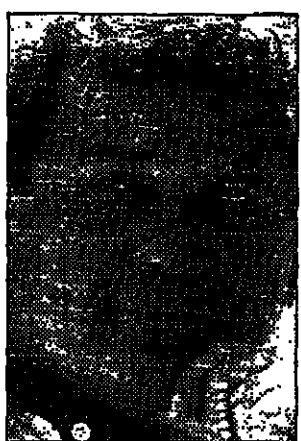
Gen Holomisa told a Johannesburg press conference that Mr Kerzner had helped to finance the ANC's 1994 election campaign, and that it was well-known he had funded social events for ANC leaders, including the 50th birthday



Zinzi Mandela and Thabo Mbeki both enjoyed favours from Casino boss Sol Kerzner (right)



party of the deputy president, Thabo Mbeki. He said the fact that Mr Kerzner had still not been prosecuted for his admitted bribery created the im-



pression that he was being protected by the ANC in return for favours. He made no reference to a far more striking example of

Kerzner largesse to the ANC — his funding of the high-society wedding and honeymoon of President Mandela's daughter Zinzi.

He blamed Mr Mbeki for trying to have him expelled from the ANC.

It is understood that President Mandela made strenuous efforts recently to protect Gen Holomisa from possible expulsion, with a series of frantic telephone calls — one to the general's home at Sun — pleading with him to apologise to Ms Sigcau for the bribery allegation. Gen Holomisa refused.

There are fears in some ANC quarters that Mr Mbeki may also have a hand in the efforts to unseat Mr Lekota — and that it might be part of a wider strategy by the deputy president to get his supporters into key positions in anticipation of his succession to

the presidency when Mr Mandela retires.

Mr Lekota has been embroiled in a long-running dispute with other ANC leaders in the Free State province, who have already managed to force him out of the provincial chairmanship of the party. The power struggle also involves corruption allegations.

Mr Lekota was one of the most respected leaders of the United Democratic Front, effectively the internal wing of the ANC in the 1980s. Keeping an Afrikaans bible by his bedside, and taking a keen interest in rugby, he is credited with having done much to dispel possible tensions with the deeply conservative Afrikaners in the Free State.

Gen Holomisa, who received his military training in the South African defence force in the apartheid years, and

was at one stage military leader of the Transkei, is nevertheless extremely popular with rank and file members of the ANC. Something of a loose cannon politically, he has shown himself to be a master of intrigue.

The row over the bribery allegations has also created a rift between Archbishop Desmond Tutu's truth commission and Mr Mandela. The commission criticised the ANC for sacking Gen Holomisa, protesting that the government was creating the impression that he was being dismissed for testifying.

Mr Mandela promptly rebuked the commission, accusing it of interfering in the presidential prerogative to hire and fire ministers. The commission said this week it was seeking a meeting with the ANC leadership to iron out their differences.

News in brief

Colombian peasants defend cocaine crop

TENS of thousands of peasants staged protests across a vast jungle area of southern Colombia yesterday against the government's United States-backed drug crop eradication programme.

The demonstrations, which the government of President Ernesto Samper insists are orchestrated by leftwing guerrillas and drug traffickers, have since spread to three other southern provinces. More than 50,000 people are blocking roads and airports and occupying small towns to protest against the destruction of what they say is their only source of income.

Meanwhile, the French president, Jacques Chirac, endorsed Mr Samper's efforts to fight cocaine production. Mr Samper, on a visit to Paris, said he had asked the European Union to maintain its aid for his crop substitution programme. Mr Chirac also said he was prepared to add a \$148 million bilateral loan, a Colombian official said. — *Reuter, Bogotá.*

Life for HIV rapists

THE Kenyan parliament has unanimously backed mandatory life imprisonment for HIV-infected rapists and anyone found guilty of deliberately infecting victims with the virus.

MPs said on Wednesday that they were concerned about the rapid spread of Aids, and criticised courts for lenient sentences for rapists and sex offenders infected with HIV.

An estimated 9.5 million people in sub-Saharan Africa are HIV-positive or have full-blown Aids. — *Reuter, Nairobi.*

Neo-Nazis under scrutiny

FOUR French neo-Nazis were yesterday placed under formal investigation in connection with the desecration six years ago of 34 Jewish graves in Carpentras, Provence.

The attack on May 10 1990 was followed by a series of police blunders, court actions and false arrests, and an outpouring of public emotion. Politicians across the spectrum were accused of manipulating the attack for their own ends.

According to the police, the four men were arrested after Yannick Gamien, aged 26, gave himself up on Tuesday in Avignon and named three accomplices.

Mr Garnier said he and four other skinheads — one of whom has since died in a motorcycle accident — desecrated the graves to mark the anniversary of Hitler's birth. The men, linked to a far-right group named as the French and European National Party (FNPE), also disinterred the body of an elderly Jewish man buried a fortnight earlier. — *Alex Duval Smith, Paris.*

Feline flood warning

TWO Swedish cats caused £30,000 worth of damage after flooding their owner's house while locked up in the bathroom. Their crestfallen owner, Roger Sjoberg, said he had come home to find the house flooded and two frightened cats sitting on the shower cups.

"We normally lock them up in the bathroom to stop them wrecking the place while we're out," he told the tabloid newspaper Kvalvosten. — *Reuter, Stockholm.*



The first known Siamese twin tortoises, born a week ago at Israel's Hebrew University, may live but share too many organs to be separated

British spy row 'hurts Russia'

A MOSCOW diplomat accused of spying for Britain seriously damaged Russia's national interests, the country's top security official was quoted as saying yesterday by the state news agency.

But Nikolai Kovalyov, director of the Federal Security Service, said the incident in May would "not affect our diplomatic relations with Great Britain."

In the cold-war-style row, Britain declared four Russian diplomats *persona non grata* in response to Moscow's expulsion of four British embassy staff. It accused them of links to Flaton Obukhov, a second secretary in the foreign ministry and a thriller writer since charged with high treason. — *Reuter, Moscow.*

The jokes are very sharp. Bruce's Oscar acceptance speech — "I stand here on legs of fire . . . you are the wind beneath me wings and I flap for you . . ." — is a fine parody of that notoriously rapid rhetorical form. Mark Lawson on Ben Elton's Popcorn

Jail threat to Megawati in Indonesian crackdown

Nick Cumming-Bruce
in Jakarta

THE Indonesian authorities have warned the opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri that she may be charged with subversion for inciting the riots last weekend which produced the country's worst violence in more than 20 years.

The police say they are waiting for the necessary permission from President Suharto to question members of parliament to call in Megawati and her PDI allies.

Sharply escalating the government's campaign against Megawati, ousted as leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) by a military-sponsored congress in June, the justice minister, Oetjo Oesman, said yesterday: "The punishment that could be meted out to the PDI officials is as hefty as that to the people who rioted."

Subversion, the most serious offence under Indonesian law, carries a maximum sentence of death.

The charge levelled at Megawati and her allies is that they were responsible for the so-called "freedom forum" staged in front of the PDI's Jakarta headquarters after she was relieved of the PDI leadership.

Her supporters used the forum to keep up a constant barrage of speeches demanding more democracy, criticising the government — and infuriating Suharto.

The forum only ended when police stormed the PDI headquarters last weekend, triggering riots in which at least three people died and 34 buildings were destroyed or damaged.

Since then the security forces have arrested more than 230 people, and Oesman's threat reinforces the signs that security chiefs are gearing up for a general crackdown against the "communist" they blame for much of the violence.

The detention of the labour leader Muchtar Pakpahan



Marines bar the way to the Jakarta court where Megawati Sukarnoputri has begun a case against the government

late on Tuesday night has stirred little popular reaction in or out of Jakarta.

But a diplomat said: "If they moved against Megawati, we would have another situation altogether."

The toughness of the justice minister's message suggests either official disquiet or embarrassment at the legal challenge initiated by Megawati's lawyers yesterday to reclaim the chairmanship of the PDI. Jakarta has been bracing it-

self for a possible eruption of further demonstrations, but the authorities have thrown a huge security cordon around the central district court, complete with army sharpshooters positioned on rooftops and bridges.

Several hundred troops and riot police, backed by armoured personnel carriers and fire engines, have been deployed at main road junctions and in side streets as police officers armed with

tear gas protect the court. It was a further indication of the sensitivity of the case that the presiding judge, I Ketut Sukarata, who two days ago heard a much-publicised murder trial, was absent with "toothache".

To jeers from Megawati's followers crammed into the court, two subordinate judges postponed the hearing until August 22.

Megawati is using the court case to try to establish who is

allowed to choose the leaders of the three officially sanctioned political parties — and as such is mounting a challenge unprecedented during Suharto's 31 years in power.

"She wants to show that it is not the government which has the final say but the members of the party," explained her faction's treasurer, Laksumana Sukardi.

Her chances of winning in Indonesia's courts are at best 50-50. But even if the case

fails, Megawati's lawyers are filing several hundred more suits against participants in the June congress.

These will not only provide a focus for her supporters but could take two years or more to grind through the high court and the court of appeal.

In the process, Sukarni believes, they will serve as "a sort of referendum on whether we should live in a state of power or a state of law".

Arabs look to Europe to break peace impasse



Other worlds

David Hirst

TWO weeks ago, Germany brokered a deal under which Hizbullah exchanged the bodies of two Israeli soldiers killed in Lebanon for those of 123 of its fighters. It was a minor affair, marking no real improvement in relations between all the parties involved — Iran, Syria, Israel, Lebanon and

Hizbullah. But the Germans saw it as a breakthrough, and spoke of "the desire in the region" for them "to get involved more heavily in political negotiations, and for the European Union as a whole to do the same".

It was part of a trend which had found much more significant expression two months earlier. When Israel launched its Grapes of Wrath assault on Lebanon, France launched its boldest piece of Middle East diplomacy in years. The foreign minister, Hervé de Charette went to the region and competed with his American counterpart, Warren Christopher, in negotiating a truce.

This encroachment on a traditional United States preserve annoyed not just Israel and the US, but even some of France's European partners, especially Britain. But Mr De Charette — who was in Algeria yesterday meeting President Lamine Zeroual — was unrepentant. Back in Beirut last month he said that France was now a "major actor" in the Middle East and

would be launching new attempts to invigorate the "peace process".

The "peace process" is of course the core issue on which any distinctive European policy for the Middle East would necessarily focus. For too long Europe has hesitantly left it to the US to shape the West's higher strategies in the region. The Arabs, essentially out of subject weakness, have connived in this, thinking that the more they flattered the US, the more of

themselves, the US found nothing wrong with the deliberate shelling of a UN base at Qana and the villagers sheltering there; still less could it see any moral equivalence with the "terror" coming from the other side.

However disappointed it was at the defeat of Shimon Peres, champion of Pax Americana, the Clinton administration has been busy acclimatising itself to the new Israeli prime minister ever since. It blithely ignores the fact that

that US policy will lead to the destruction of the peace process.

For Israel and the US, the "war on terror" is but a way of transferring the Arab-Israeli struggle from the moral and political grounds on which it properly belongs to security ones which are merely derivative of it. And it is absurd to fight Arab or Muslim terror without any acknowledgement that there is an Israeli terror too.

It becomes a matter of obvious self-interest when, on Israel's behalf, the US expects the Europeans to go along with sanctions, damaging to commerce, in the service of a political agenda on which they disagree anyway.

Europe balked at doing that in Paris this week. But it is not enough. With Mr Clinton's acquiescence in the aggressive, expansionist Zionism Mr Netanyahu embodies, Europe needs to develop a Middle East policy which systematically challenges that of the US on the moral and political fundamentals.

Unlike the US, the EU did condemn the Qana massacre. And in a formal statement it echoed the demand of the recent Arab summit that, for the peace process to continue, Israel must return to the key principles — "land for peace" and self-determination for the Palestinians — which Mr Netanyahu has repudiated.

But the evolution of a common European policy is a halting process. It is clearly not one that Britain, with its transatlantic affinities, is going to lead; nor can Germany, with its guilty past. France is the obvious candidate.

Israeli PM 'in secret talks with Syria on Lebanon'

Debra Linzer in Jerusalem

BINYAMIN NETANYAHU has secretly met a Syrian envoy in Jerusalem to discuss a possible Israeli troop pull-out from Lebanon as a first step towards peace with Damascus, an Israeli newspaper reported yesterday.

The meeting, at the request of Syria, took place shortly before the Israeli prime minister visited the United States on July 8, the daily Ha'aretz reported. It said only Mr Netanyahu and two of his advisers knew about the meeting.

A source who spoke on condition of anonymity said the two sides were feeling out each other's positions and there had been movement in exploratory contacts.

Mr Netanyahu's media adviser, David Bar Ilan, dismissed the report, however. "We deny it. It didn't happen," he said. Damascus had no immediate comment.

In remarks published in Syrian newspapers yesterday, President Hafez al-Assad vowed to continue working towards a "just and comprehensive peace that puts an end to aggression".

But President Elias Hrawi of Lebanon said in Beirut that his country opposed a "Lebanon-first" option and favoured a comprehensive peace agreement. — *AP.*

● Jordan's King Hussein will travel to Syria tomorrow on his first visit since Amman's 1994 peace treaty with Israel strained relations.

Statistics for slaughter

Yet again we are deceived about what we eat

AT THE very least, the Government's announcement that one in every hundred calves born to BSE-infected cows will inherit the disease raises important questions about the effectiveness of the measures being taken to eradicate it. At worst, the findings make a nonsense of everything that the Government has done so far. Either way, they are a reminder that BSE remains a continuing scourge of our meat and not some trick got up by foreigners to annoy the British. In any event, the Ministry of Agriculture's announcement of the new findings yesterday was extraordinarily biased.

According to MAFF, the measures already taken against BSE acknowledged the theoretical possibility of maternal transmission of the disease. There is therefore, MAFF concludes, no need to take any new measures, because the old ones will sweep up any cases from this new source. But the reasoning here is tendentious, and perhaps seriously faulty. It rests upon the accuracy of MAFF's calculation that only one in a hundred calves born to BSE cows is affected. If vertical transmission is sufficiently rare to be certainly wiped out by the slaughter programme now in force then MAFF is in the clear. But if it turns out to be more common, then MAFF's assumption could soon be seriously awry and the predicted timetable for eradication, speculative enough already, could lengthen substantially.

In any event, the admission at this stage of cow-to-calf transmission of BSE is a major indictment of the way in which our scientists have conducted their research into this extensive disease. BSE has been known about for a decade, but throughout that time officials have adamantly denied that it could be transmitted from dams to calves. Only a week ago, on July 24, Douglas Hogg repeated the old ortho-

doxy that feed was overwhelmingly the key to BSE. Now, as though from nowhere, we are presented with an authoritative statement that it not only can be transmitted by birth, but also that it is. Note the words in the MAFF announcement yesterday. "One per cent of calves born to cows which die of BSE will themselves die of BSE caught from their mothers". Not "may die" but "will die". And not such a remote certainty either. One in a hundred means a lot of inherited BSE — many hundreds and perhaps some thousands of cases — and there is no authoritative explanation of why the disease is inherited in some cases and not in others. It is barely credible that this was not known until now.

It is not just the substance of yesterday's announcement which is disturbing, but the disgraceful way it was made. Yesterday's press release shows that the findings were circulated to a meeting of the Government's own Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee on July 19. Yet at no time either in agriculture question time in the Commons on July 18 or in the debate on the accelerated slaughter programme on July 24, did any government minister make any reference whatever to the research at the Central Veterinary Laboratory, even though the findings must have been known within the ministry at about the time ministers were answering questions on July 18 — and certainly by the time of the debate six days later. The suspicion is that Douglas Hogg withheld the information from the Commons and waited until Parliament had gone away for the summer before releasing it in a form which ensured the minimum public accountability. Once again, agriculture ministers stand accused of acting in the interest primarily of producers and of deceiving the public about matters vitally affecting the food we eat.

For New Deal, read raw deal

Clinton's welfare measures will hit poor Americans hard

BILL CLINTON's promise in the 1992 presidential campaign to "end welfare as we know it" is turning out to be all too true. As the next election approaches he has bowed to a Republican Congress, signing a bill which abolishes the federal safety net set up after the Depression to protect those most at risk. Now the burden shifts from Washington to the state governments some of whom will seize the chance to cut their own welfare programmes further. Bizarrely, the President agrees that the bill contains "serious flaws". He claims to have huddled for two and a half hours on Wednesday with members of his cabinet in an agony of indecision before deciding to sign — against the opposition of his Secretary for Health and Human Services. He describes this meeting as being "a very moving thing". The people most likely to be moved, by rage or despair, are those who will suffer as a result.

The original thrust of Mr Clinton's campaign proposal four years ago was to provide new jobs for many of those out of work and funds to enable them to be trained, so that the huge federal budget could be cut as "welfare checks were replaced with paychecks." But the bill which has now been passed cuts the welfare without guaranteeing the workfare. A progressive state such as Wisconsin may continue with its own innovative scheme while others choose not to do so. A few conscientious states may compensate for reduced federal welfare funding. Others such as California are

already welcoming the chance to reduce their own budgets too. There is no mandatory provision for poor families whose entitlement, under the new rules which impose time limits on benefit, expires. Not surprisingly, New York City's Mayor Rudolph Giuliani — although a Republican — has been lobbying for weeks against the bill which will further tax his already overloaded budget. Those who have run out of benefit in states with an anti-welfare philosophy will simply migrate to those which continue to provide some support. The big urban centres will become even more burdened than before. These fundamental omissions in the new system are compounded by the punitive cuts which it contains. The food stamp programme has been ripped apart and disabled children and poor immigrants will suffer serious losses of entitlement. Mr Clinton has said he will work for reversal of some of these cuts after he has signed the bill; his chances of success with a victorious congress will be even lower than before.

Mr Clinton has argued that the bill is at least less bad than before: it is no longer linked to cuts in Medicare and represents a "real step forward." What it really represents, as the Washington Post said yesterday, is "political expediency and opportunism," with the president seeking to neutralise Bob Dole's anti-welfare pitch to the electors. If this is the Clinton model, we can only hope it is not emulated in our own approaching election by any admirers over here.

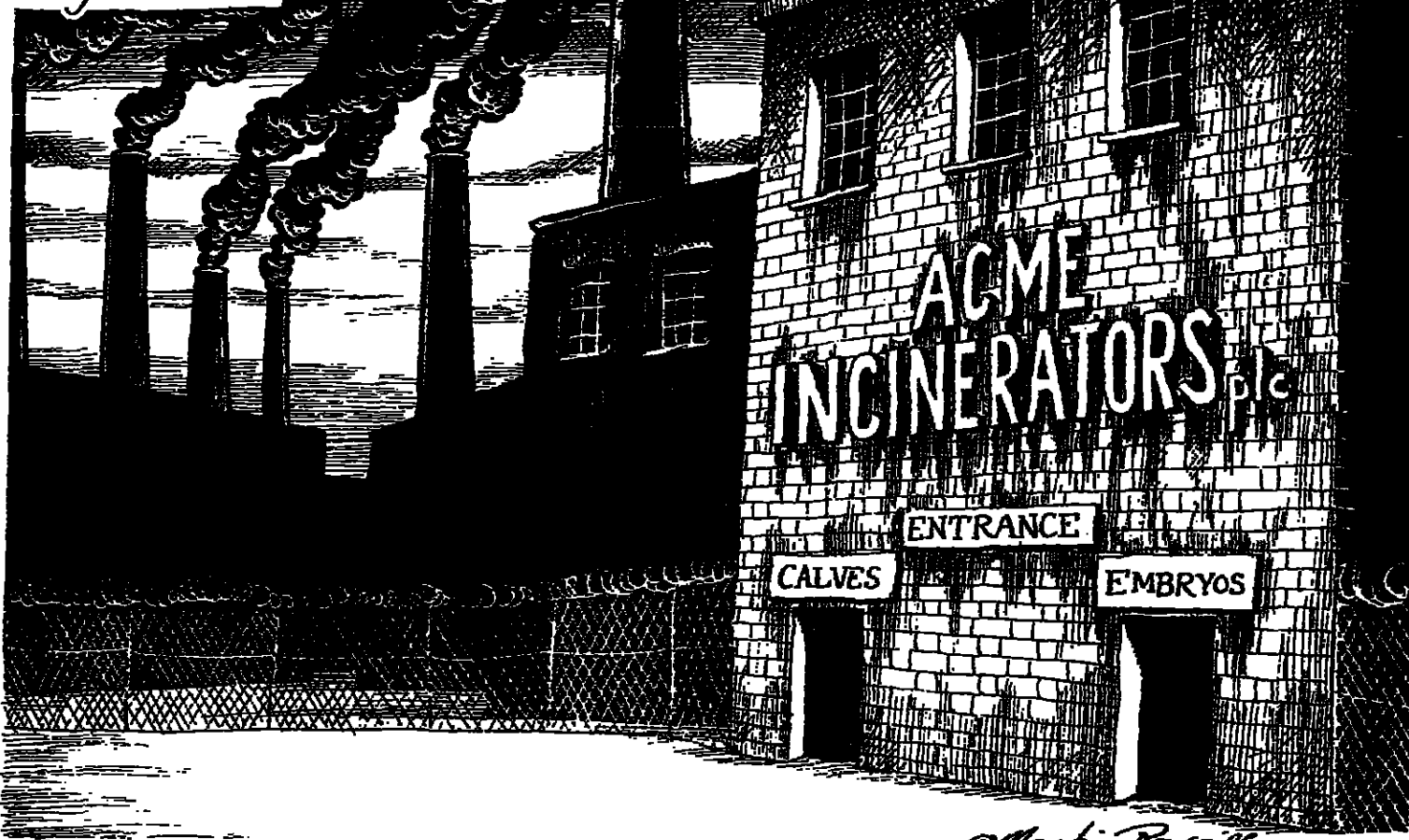
Brent into Willesden won't go

The answer is simple: make them two boroughs again

IF LOCAL people agree, the London Borough of Brent may shortly be struck from municipal directories. The council voted this week to consider the case for a change. The marriage of Willesden with Wembley which constituted Brent would continue as before, but a new name would be found: "Wembley & Willesden", perhaps. This, proponents suggest, could lift the blight which has settled on Brent over the past two decades, as "barmy Brent" when Labour were in and "Bent" once the Tories took over. Yet however unpopular locally, Brent is far from being the silliest name to emerge from the changes of the sixties and seventies. It was neither a dredged-up relic, like Haringey, or a twee piece of fancy like Waverley or Three Rivers. It was certainly to be preferred to the proffered portmanteau solution, Wemblesden.

thanks to the stadium, everyone knows where Wembley is, which cannot be said of Willesden. But such theories mistake an important truth about local loyalties. For many, there's nowhere quite as repellent as the suburb next door. In that context, changing the name to Wembley and Willesden might make their union even less stable, rather than more. When Herefordshire was forced to cohabit with Worcestershire, both parties retained their names, rather than settling for Worcester or Herecester, or some PR wheeze like Elgar County. But the partners never even began to bond with each other, and the Banham Committee wisely put them asunder. Rhodes Boyson (Con, Brent N) and Ken Livingstone (Lab, Brent E) may agree on little, but both believe that Brent should go back to being two separate boroughs. Understandably so. You can't unite chalk and cheese just by inserting an ampersand.

Beyond Satire



Letters to the Editor

Tragic legacy of IVF

INFERTILITY, like any other physiological dysfunction, is, as Hugo Young suggests (Science that produces more death than life, Aug 1), a misfortune. But, as misfortunes go, it surely ranks low compared to, say, losing one's legs or sight or to the hopelessness of long-term unemployment.

IVF, however, does not address infertility, but offers a "cure" for the socially constructed "problem" of childlessness. Childlessness can only be seen as a problem by reference to the pervasive, normative image of the happy family unit which, increasingly, resembles the real lives of fewer and fewer people.

It is the cultural insistence, whether through the nudges and winks of family and friends, or the less subtle badgerings of commerce and the media, that procreation is the necessary condition of fulfilment, citizenship and the good life which constructs the "desperation" upon which the peddlars of IVF prey.

The remark on radio by Ian Craft, director of the London Gynaecology and Fertility clinic, that stored embryos could be used as a "replacement" for a child who dies must be as offensive to any caring parent as it is indicative of the emotional and ethical nightmare which opportunistic practitioners, abetted by a feeble regulatory regime, have unleashed. Like IVF the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority is a failed experiment. It must do more than apply its rubber stamp and then sit on its hands.

Root Cartwright, Chairman, British Organisation of Non-Parents, 5M Box 5886, London WC1N 3XX.

HUGO Young has identified a central moral question but his answer to it is mistaken. It is the best part of our natures that cries out in horror at the thought of the killing of these embryos.

I was taught that between 30-50 per cent of natural conceptions do not come to term. They are subject to miscarriage, often before the woman is aware of being pregnant. Do we regard this as a natural carnage? Does it feel like a tragedy? I don't think it does, even though the number of frozen embryos killed yesterday is a tiny fraction of the total who have died naturally in Britain over the past five years.

The frozen embryos cannot have sensed, or experienced, or expected anything. The unshakable illusion of their moral worth happens because we know they were created to become children, and we must choose what to do with them.

We were not built to handle this question, and the stress of it makes us wrongly see an embryo as a kind of child, and the moral importance of its death taking precedence over the (very definite) suffering of the infertile couple.

The moral dilemma is this. If we can bear to overcome our instinctive horror at the thought of deliberately killing these embryos, what else can we bear to do?

Christopher Pontac, 80 Greywood street, London SW16 6QN.

HUGO Young says that IVF should be stopped because it results in more death than life. His argument leads to the conclusion that we should not permit the reproductive method where the numbers of rejected embryos is the least. One day that might rule out natural reproduction.

FIND it ironic that frozen embryos have been destroyed across the country using alcohol. Mothers beware.

Nick Charles, Founder, Chaucer Clinic, 33 Bernard's Hospital Estate, Uxbridge Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 4XB.

Nutty answer to the red in peril

YOUR cuts back page picture of a red squirrel was unfortunately used to denigrate another mammal, the grey squirrel. No doubt both take their own existence seriously and perhaps we should not choose between them on looks — they might both win over large furred apes with small ears and eyes. Also the red squirrel's future is threatened mainly by habitat destruction by humans, which it also predates as a member of the British Isles fauna (see also otters, pine martens, polecats.) Surely we need to take responsibility for our effect on animal habitats rather than trying to blame another species, the grey squirrel, which did not invent ships or aeroplanes and fly itself over the Atlantic.

Lesley Hedges, 13 Surton Street, Birkby, Huddersfield HD2 2TD.



GREY squirrels, the astute residents of city parks, suburban gardens and woodlands are to be fed food laced with rat poison so they haemorrhage to death. Or shot, or rather fatally wounded since their speed of movement makes a clean kill a rarity.

We have killed off red squirrels by allowing pollution and development to denude the country of the limited types of trees they can feed from.

Now the Forestry Commission and other timber producers (with their vested interest in getting the little grey "pests" out of their commercial forests)

have joined forces and tagged on to the Government's Joint Nature "Conservation" Committee for its proposed programme of slaughter.

Now they've suddenly "discovered" a convenient virus the greys give to the reds. What virus? Who discovered it? When — and, if it exists, where's the evidence that reds get it from the greys, since feeding habits now mean they can rarely co-exist?

M Edwards, Elyn Cottage, Chapel Hill, Amberley, Gloucestershire.

The gradual greening of Labour

HUGO Young has a point in criticising an environmental grounds Labour's latest policy statement, but he's unfair to the Party's wider commitment. The Road To The Manifesto is indeed thin on environmental pledges. However the Environmental Policy Commission — a senior, joint Shadow Cabinet/National Executive Committee forum — meets regularly to evaluate and improve Labour's detailed policy statements from an environmental perspective. The Environmental Protection portfolio has been upgraded, with the restoration of a designated spokesperson of Shadow Cabinet status. Joan Ruddock continues to work behind the scenes preparing the details of Labour's environmental programme for government. And underpinning it all is the policy statement in Trust For Tomorrow, much the most detailed and comprehensive environmental statement from any of the main parties, and described by Jonathon Porritt (no friend of Labour he) as "a genuinely radical stuff" and "a jewel of a policy document".

In SERA we made no secret of the fact that we weren't thrilled with The Road To The Manifesto. But so long as

there's no question of junking the earlier commitments, and we have been assured that there isn't — we know that Labour has gone furthest to meet our concerns.

Hugh Raven, Advisor to the Environmental Policy Commission, The Socialist Environment and Resources Association, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ.

Lulu's life Lenin's death

IWOULD have thought Hello! was a more suitable place for Lulu's Diary, (G2, July 31). Was I the only one not to find funny the anecdote about the TWA plane's wreckage polluting the beach of her planned holidays? How generous this modern Snow White to send her little protégé some leggings because she also has the right to look good. She regretted that some people think "you can't be pretty and clever at the same time". With such articles, no wonder.

Stéphanie Duverger, 5 Fasset Road, Kingston, Surrey KT1 2TD.

HAD Lenin revealed the New Economic Policy to the 10th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in March 1924 (When's World, July 31) its members would indeed have been "astonished". The 13th Congress had recently taken place and Lenin himself had died on 24th January.

Councillor Sir Jeremy Beecham, Association of Metropolitan Authorities, 35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BJ.

Need or greed brings Lottery money to the capital?

WHY is it that John Major and Mrs Bottomley can hand out Lottery money? I thought there were quangoes of the great and good whose job it was to do this.

Jeanine Hunt, Cobblers Cottage, Chapel Lane, Adderbury OX17 3LY.

SINCE when has the Government been responsible for the allocation of Lottery funds? The Prime Minister with the Manchester centre rebuilding, then Ian Sproat with our Olympic Team rebuilding. Is this the shape of things to come?

Robert Parker, Heversham Cottage, Woodhouse Lane, Heversham, Cumbria LA7 7EW.

HUGH Bayley MP says that figures extracted from the Lottery regulator, Oflot, prove that English regions and the east Midlands in particular are losing out to London. This confirms my research: in 1995 the level of grant handed out by the Millennium Commission and the National Lottery showed that Greater London was receiving £36.07 per head as compared to £3.21 per head for the east Midlands.

If this favouring of London and the south east is a question of these areas submitting bigger and better bids, then the Department of National

Heritage should provide technical assistance to assist regions in putting together bids which can compete with the higher profile projects. Perhaps, however, it is the case that an over-centralised government favours London and the south east. The problem with allocating funding without a strategic and co-ordinated regional framework means that inevitably some of the needier areas are losers.

Arlene McCarthy MEP, European Parliamentary Labour Party's Spokesperson for Regional Affairs, 16 North Road, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 9AS.

MANY of the projects receiving the largest sums from the Lottery are national organisations, such as the Royal Opera House. These projects create some jobs for Londoners but if one considers the money that has gone to local groups, London fares no better than the rest of the country.

The level of deprivation in parts of London is the worst in Britain. The demand for funds from voluntary and community groups demonstrates the capital's need, not its greed.

Stephen O'Brien, Chief Executive, London First, Christine Holloway, Director, London Voluntary Service Council, 156 Holloway Road, London N7 4PA.

Learning shorthand on the job

IN order to get the sex workers off the streets and into the prospect of a better job, could not the brothels run secretarial courses alongside their principal business? I understand that shorthand and typing lessons were provided by the Pam Chapman Drama School in Birmingham in the 1960s, thereby providing a safety net for those entering an equally hazardous profession.

Mary-Rose Benton, 43 Windermere Way, Slough on Severn, Worcester DY13 8QJ.

YOUR Leader (Old profession: new thinking, July 30) asks how society can accommodate prostitution while minimising its associated problems. Here in Manchester and in many other British cities, one potential solution already exists.

The number of "saunas" and "health clubs" has mushroomed in the past few years. These places tend to be found in commercial rather than residential locations. They advertise discreet entrances at the rear of the premises. Judging by their proliferation and the lack of attention they receive from the police one can only assume that they are tolerated as "brothels in all but name. Can the stamp of legality really be so dreadfully?

Fred Edwards, 55 Beanfields, Worsley M28 2PJ.

SO the Amsterdam red light district represents a "civilised" alternative to the present UK situation concerning brothels (Letters, July 31).

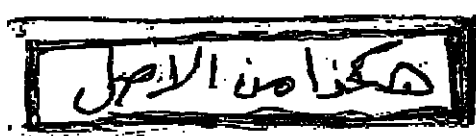
Is this the same place where women from Eastern Europe are coerced into working as prostitutes after being tricked into leaving their homes on the promise of conventional jobs and then having their passports stolen? Very civilised.

Mike Farish, 15 Northbrook Road, Hither Green SE13 5QT.

A Country Diary

GLOUCESTERSHIRE: Summer care for the flock, on a very short time the sheep is being literally eaten alive by a swarming mass of bloated maggots which burrow into the flesh. So the best treatment is prevention and it is supplied by a compound called Vetrazine which is sprayed in a trail down the spine of the animal and spreads laterally to provide protection for a six week period. The lambs were done when the ewes were sheared but both groups were due in late July so we penned them tightly to facilitate the administration of the treatment. This showed one lamb to be potentially vulnerable with dung soiling her tail so we did a worming treatment too. That did not work, so a more serious wormer was needed. Veterinary consultation suggested coccidiosis so we collected the metred blue drench dose that deals with this problem. What sharp little teeth lambs do have you learn at this point — for keeping the mouth open for a quick shot down the throat is my task in this procedure.

COLIN LUCKHURST



Diary
Matthew Norman

CONFUSION surrounds the spiritual journey of Margaret Thatcher. Previously known as a less than fanatical Methodist, the Baroness has recently been noted in devout prayer at the Chapel Royal in St James's Palace (The Duchess of Kent was a regular there before moving to Rome). A leading theologian describes the chapel as "the ecclesiastical equivalent of skunk... they think they can handle it, but it leads to something stronger, and soon only the strongest incense will do". Inevitably, questions will be raised about Lady Thatcher. Perhaps understandably, Cardinal Basil Hume is playing things close to his chest for the moment. "Is this a silly season bit?" he asked yesterday. "That's just rumour and gossip." Lady Thatcher's office was similarly opaque, saying: "She wouldn't wish to comment on her religious affiliations at the moment." Understandable, however, is the vogueism of Catholicism, and especially among the fashionable right. Telegraph editor Chas Moore, Environment Secretary Little Gungun and prison fiend Ann Widdecombe have all made conversions, while sane and rational Paul Johnson remains among the world's most volatile capitalists. He has worked tirelessly to convert his new idol Mr Tony Blair. Surely he isn't about to pull off a sensational win double, by taking his former idol to Rome?

THREE are dread days for the grey squirrel. Following reports that they are being culled to save their red cousins from extinction, we rang Lord Wyatt of Weoford at his Tuscan holiday home. In February, the creator of the 1976 classic *The Exploits of Mr Scurry* told the *Lords* in a debate that the grey "does no harm to the trees or the birds in my garden". When we rang yesterday, to ask for words of support, Woody adopted an Italian accent and claimed to be out. This was a ruse, for when we rang back soon after, affecting a far plumper voice, he instantly admitted to his true identity. Alas, a poor line cut us off, but we hope to get to the bottom of this untimely contretemps next week.

TWO contenders emerge in the quest for the August Book of the Month. One is *Motley's Diary*, "John Motson's personal record of the 95/96 football season". On the grounds that this may prove dangerously exciting, also being considered is *A Locomotive's Log, 1897-85*, by Bill Alcock. "A 224-page illustrated book of recollections and anecdotes about Bill's days driving steam, and later diesel, locomotives." It's just too close to call.

THE campaign to register Bolmondely Relief has sidestepped early problems. On receiving the Charity Commissioners' starting pack, we were alarmed by paragraph 14 of form CCI (So You Want To Start A Charity?), which says: "A charity must be set up for the benefit of the public at large rather than the personal benefit of individuals." But after discussions with the Commissioners, we have found a way around this... by stating the charity's aim as "the alleviation of hardship for Peter Bolmondely MP and other gentlefolk suffering privations due to their self-devotion to the public good". Details of post-registration money raisers will follow. And I am thrilled to report that other friends are rallying to the cause. In the *New Statesman* diary, poor Bolmondely reports that Anberton Wang has taken to bugging him the odd £25 for articles in the *Literary Review*. If only others were as big hearted, we wouldn't need the charity at all.

SPLENDID news from Norway, where ballerina Mette Lil Johansen, 30, has won a dream home in a competition. Miss Johansen picked up the £70,000 house by clinging to a wall for five days. Despite suffering swollen legs and hallucinating about a ferry hitting Denmark, she outlasted 396 rivals, triumphing when law student Benedicte Rikstad collapsed and was rushed to hospital.

HIS LAST WORDS WERE: "LOOK, THERE'S A PARK CAR!"

Why cigarettes are hard to stub out

Commentary Peter Preston

THE man in the fringed cowboy shirt, cowboy belt and boots, stood curiously huddled behind a bush in Spring Street, St Helena. You expected upstage California swagger. But he was hunched and sheepish, glancing over his shoulder at the tables of the Spring Street Restaurant, waiting for something. Waiting, it transpired, for the shrill shriek of Irene as she saw her goddamn husband smoking again. Marlboro Man turned Weedtown Wimp. I threw away my pipe of 30 years almost 24 months ago to the day. I knew, amongst other things, that I could never visit America again in peace unless that happened. *The Land of the Free* is the land that persecutes tobacco and all its users. Hotels, restaurants, public buildings, sports stadiums, cabs, even some streets and squares, they're all off limits, with swingeing fines attached.

This week's special horror is prolonged airline security chaos in no-smoking airports. Give the terrorists an extra kick. Watch passengers turn grey and green and start to shake compulsively. Here, by common consent, California rides the highest political wave. The regulations are tighter, the zealotry of the enforcement keener. Smokers are ground down year after year, from 25 per cent to 20 now, and falling. A re-elected Clinton will legislate some more. And Britain is catching up. Probably the firmest, least weaselly pledge in Tony Blair's fledgling manifesto is a prospective Labour ban on cigarette advertising. It will, apparently, vanish overnight. You would not expect that particular sweep of the legislative pen to prove greatly controversial or to be bitterly resisted. Few current Westminster politicians will fight the tobacco fight openly; even Lady Thatcher earns her fattest fees abroad. Journalists everywhere, as usual, seem lined up for a ban. The editorial columns won't huff, let alone puff. But even the clearest issues have their misty edges. The point about California is that it proceeds on every front restricting promotion and opportunity, but boosting a massive health education budget hypothecated from state cigarette taxes. It doesn't believe that one move solves all. The British debate, by contrast, seems almost facile. We've lived for so long with the thought that banning press and poster advertising holds every key that we've ceased to think much beyond it. Time to start thinking. By chance, a couple of weeks ago, I found myself chairing a private Cambridge seminar which brought advertisers, agencies and battling pressure groups together. We spent a long, hot afternoon on tobacco advertising. Towards the end, playing Dumbleby, I asked who, after the debate, still supported a ban. There were 40 or so in the room. Only three hands went up. I'd probably have added a fourth myself; but only with its thumb well-sucked. Let's not wallow in too much talk about freedom of expression and freedom to advertise. That may be important, but it's not advanced full-staready even by the industry. It is the practicality — hard enough and often cynical — which counts. Do bans work? Norway might say yes; Ireland might say not particularly. Correlations from Britain after the end of cinema and then TV advertising are patchy. (Do find an obvious

link you have to look to price and tax rises.) The deepest independent research — by Martin Duffy at Leicester University — concludes, at first glance bizarrely, that a total ban would probably increase cigarette smoking a little, because Duffy finds a correlation between the large health warnings that go inset with every ad and public awareness of smoking's dangers. Children of 11 or 12, the group of prime concern where smoking is growing, know that what they're doing is perilous because the ads tell them so. Take away the advertising, perhaps, and you'd merely have another great unadvised, but not with the sales potential of the Number One for Growth, ecstasy: never a penny ever spent on ads and only occasional warnings from the news. Teenagers don't believe, from their peer groups or their own experience, that ecstasy is dangerous. And they lack the relentless tobacco mechanism to tell them that they may be wrong. OTHER practicalities. If the tobacco companies can't spend their money on ads — over 550 million a year in the press alone, a great many journalists' wages — what will they do next? No need to guess, because they tell us precisely what will happen. If price is the biggest weapon against smoking, then prices will be lowered. The cash that could have gone on posters will go on bargain offers. (A price war to warm Rupert's cockles. Could extra taxes fill that gap?) Not easily, because tobacco smuggling from Europe and beyond grows exponentially as the price-differential rises. Ken Clarke is already having to hold drink taxes in check.

He's potentially no freer with cigarettes. Europe's fabled single market boxes him in, a Europe which pays hundreds of millions every year to subsidise its tobacco growers and likes an advertising ban because it takes competitive pressure off residual state tobacco companies. No ads there often means bigger loot for the government: you take the farm subsidies, the manufacturers' profits and the tax. Harmonisation looks a far horizon. In detail, then, there is nothing simple about a ban. Even small steps towards it provide unexpected complexity. The latest voluntary British option, has been banning ads in the vicinity of schools. Very good; except that poster companies, for prevention purposes, now have a complete list of sites near the gates, and they're fuller than ever with sweets and crisps and fizzy drinks to rot your teeth. A ban, on such evidence, will be more symbolic than straightforwardly effective. Politics by moral gesture. It may, I think, be embraced as part of an overall policy. But it's not much of a policy by itself. California has the resources to do far more because it makes smokers pay every time they buy a packet. Whistled all of our health education advertising budget amounts to less than a quarter of what the tobacco companies alone spend in newspapers and periodicals. Big Tobacco head to head, persuading, reminding, cajoling, Irene knows the facts. Her bringing husband knows that she knows them. Maybe New Labour needs a surgeon to paint her nose. After all, if you're finally going to do something, you ought to be sure that it's something worth doing.



In the real world

Gordon Brown dismisses Roy Hattersley's dream of 'equality of outcome' as a nice idea in theory, but of no practical value to a new Labour government

I WAS brought up in Scotland in the 1950s and 1960s to believe in a Britain where a commitment to equality reflected our passion for social justice. Now in 1996 we live in a Britain where inequality is growing faster than ever before on a scale undreamt of when the welfare state was created in 1945. To take just one example of this pervasive inequality: children of parents doing manual work, with low-level qualifications identical to those of children of professional parents, are only half as likely to stay on at school and one third as likely to obtain jobs in professional occupations. So, as both Roy Hattersley (Balance of Power, July 25) and I have said, we must restore equality to its rightful place in the socialist trinity of values, alongside liberty and solidarity. We agree about the importance of equality and a classless society. But where we

part company is on Roy's insistence on equality of outcome, a goal which even he himself admits can never be achieved. Socialism, Roy, must stand well clear of impossibility. Our aim is genuine equality of opportunity for all — and to make that happen will be the central goal of the next Labour government. The current condition of Britain cries out for change. We live in a country in which ambition is crushed by avoidable poverty where we have seen wage-inequality widen faster than anywhere in Europe and where there is a real risk of an underclass. A Labour government will not tolerate growing inequality and social division. That is why the goal of equality — and the need for us to act together to make it a reality — is now the central dividing line in politics. In the past, Labour made equality the issue because we were passionately committed to social justice. Equality is

more important than ever today. For now in the 1990s in the new economy, equality of opportunity is also the key to economic prosperity. Why? Because we are in a fast-changing information-based economy dominated by the importance of knowledge, the skills of people and their ability to adapt. Indeed, the defining characteristic of economy is less an individual's ability to gain access to capital and far more his or her ability to use it creatively. In the years after 1979, the new right argued that economic progress depended upon liberty, which itself meant the pursuit of inequality. Now increasingly people see the converse as true, that liberty, equality of opportunity and prosperity are mutually reinforcing. Indeed, the more opportunity there is, and the wider it is distributed, the more liberty is enhanced. As I said in the John Smith memorial lecture, all roads to economic prosperity now pass through equality. But we must be clear what we mean by equality. In contrast to Roy Hattersley's unsustainable version of equality of outcome, I propose a maximalist version of equality of opportunity which is both desirable and possible. A maximalist equality of opportunity is not the old-

son leaves school at 16 because of family-income pressures and has no chance of further education or training, that is not equal opportunity. And we must act, if someone loses their job or reaches a dead end, that is not equal opportunity either. There is another reason for choosing equality of opportunity in preference to Hattersley's equality of outcome. It is much more good reporting the root causes of inequality and poverty and provide a principle around which a modern economy can be organised — something the proponents of equality of outcome cannot meaningfully do. For those who have relied on the tax and benefit system to compensate people for their poverty rather than doing something more fundamental — tackling the root causes of poverty and inequality — by creating employment, educational and economic opportunities that help move people out of poverty.

Every major academic study shows that increasingly unemployment and low pay are caused by the unequal access to knowledge and skills. To talk simply of more spending and more taxes is to concentrate on compensating the poor for the consequences of inequality, when the challenge is far more fundamental. It is to deal with its causes — unemployment and low skills. Our concept of making lifelong opportunities for learning really comes alive with the new University for Industry and Individual Learning Accounts for everyone. It means every young person and not just an elite should have education after 16, should have a qualification and skills and should have work. Creating educational and employment opportunities for all — and providing a second chance in education and securing the jobs they need. So when Roy Hattersley asks whether we will do more for a millionaire than for his unemployed constituent the answer is clear. Indeed, our windfall levy on the unfair profits of the utilities is expressly designed to create a fair deal for the unemployed. At best Roy can offer compensation for the failure of government to act at a fundamental level. Instead, we offer the chance of ending poverty by tackling its causes. Roy Hattersley's equality of outcomes would not only leave the causes of poverty undressed but requires a prescribed, centralist imposition of outcomes, pays little regard to effort of desert and would threaten a state where opportunities are not provided but imposed. And it would not even be seen as fair. It would force people to do something they are not, when the real task is to help people make the most of what they are. Our task, taking a belief in equality most people share and strengthening it into a powerful political principle, is to make it possible for everyone to realise their potential to the full. It is to bridge the gap between what they are and what they have in themselves to become.

Gordon Brown is shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer and Labour MP for Dumfries East

Come into the kitchen for breakfast



Bel Littlejohn

THERE'S so much to read in the papers, there really is. That's not to say there isn't room for improvement. Personally, I wish there were more foreign news in the broadsheets, but then that's just the kind of person I am — serious, thoughtful and with my own far-reaching perspective on world affairs. Frankly, I would have become a foreign correspondent if I hadn't thought I could do a helluva lot more good as an award-winning columnist. And while we're on the subject, I'm sorry, but I'm sick to death of stories about the royal family. If I have to read another article on Charles and Diana or Andrew and Fergie I think I'll scream. I mean, why should we be interested in what Diana has for breakfast, or what colour Fergie is choosing to paint her new whirlpool bath? (Actually, the answer to the first is "Just a large cup of Herbal Tea and perhaps a Ryvita", and to the second "pale blue with a hint of peach" — but frankly who cares? But what I'd like to know is this — is one Ryvita enough, particularly with her problems? And how can Fergie afford a new whirlpool bath anyway? It's high time we were given answers to these questions. Incidentally, I learnt the hard way from someone who really knows that Prince Edward is trying to cut down on sugar in his coffee and has taken up the sugar-substitute Canderel — a fact I've yet to see reported in any paper: so set me to good reporting. My best part of any newspaper, if I'm being really honest, is not the foreign news or politics or health or even environmental catastrophes. No: my absolute fave part is the women columnists, especially those who aren't ashamed to tell us exactly what's been happening in their private lives, warts and all. Needless to say, I've had plenty of requests from lovely, lovely readers asking me to do the same. "Bel," they say, "you're a font of wisdom and terrific source of informed comment on national and international news — but please, please, please, Bel, tell us a bit more about yourself." So here goes: A Day In The Life Of Britain's Most Concerned Columnist.

which definitely makes much more sense in the long run, I made myself a cup of tea but when I poured the milk it floated in globs to the surface. I realised at once that it was off. On the radio, they were talking about the Northern Ireland situation, and whether in the long run the two nations would be united, which might make more sense. I switched over to Radio 2. I then took a teaspoon and tried to fish the globs from the top of the tea, but with only partial success. I then decided to have a cup of coffee instead; I don't mind coffee without milk but I have tea without milk. I put one-and-a-half spoons of Gold Blend into the blue mug with the chip on it and then I added sugar-substitute in it and waited a minute for it to cool. A few minutes later, I began to sip my coffee. It tasted quite coffeeish. On the radio, they were discussing the Single Currency, so I switched back to Radio 4. I was halfway through my coffee when I decided to make a piece of toast. I did this by cutting a slice of bread off a fresh loaf with a sharp knife and then placing it in the toaster. I have found over the years that this is a good method, as it means both sides can be cooked at once, and without heat. The toast completed, I spread it with Olivio, an effective butter substitute to which I am devoted, and a thin layer of thick-cut orange marmalade made to my own recipe by the late, great Elizabeth David, given to me recently by a close friend, Barbara, when she came to stay. On the radio, news came through of either a famine or a drought in either Africa or India. I didn't catch which. My marmalade on toast was delicious, but my left hand was a bit sticky. So I turned on the cold tap and gave it a good clean. On the radio, they were discussing the future of Russia under an ailing Yeltsin. This set me to good reporting. My health to drink Herbal Tea every morning. And isn't it about time I invested in a whirlpool bath? They say they're completely fab, though obviously one would have to go for the right colour. The announcer said that news had just come in of a major pile-up involving 10 cars, so I switched back to Radio 2, wondering whether the day would be hot enough to wear my beloved old Katherine Hamnett Nuclear Awareness T-shirt...

Still just 7.35am, and 600 words later I've hardly even finished breakfast! As I have long suspected, the details of my day-to-day life are proving a very rich source of inspiration for this award-winning column. Next week, I'll tell you what it's like getting dressed, and in a fortnight you'll learn all about the way I brush my teeth, and the week after... but I mustn't ruin it for you.

New Internationalist magazine John doesn't get it

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Ivan Lalić

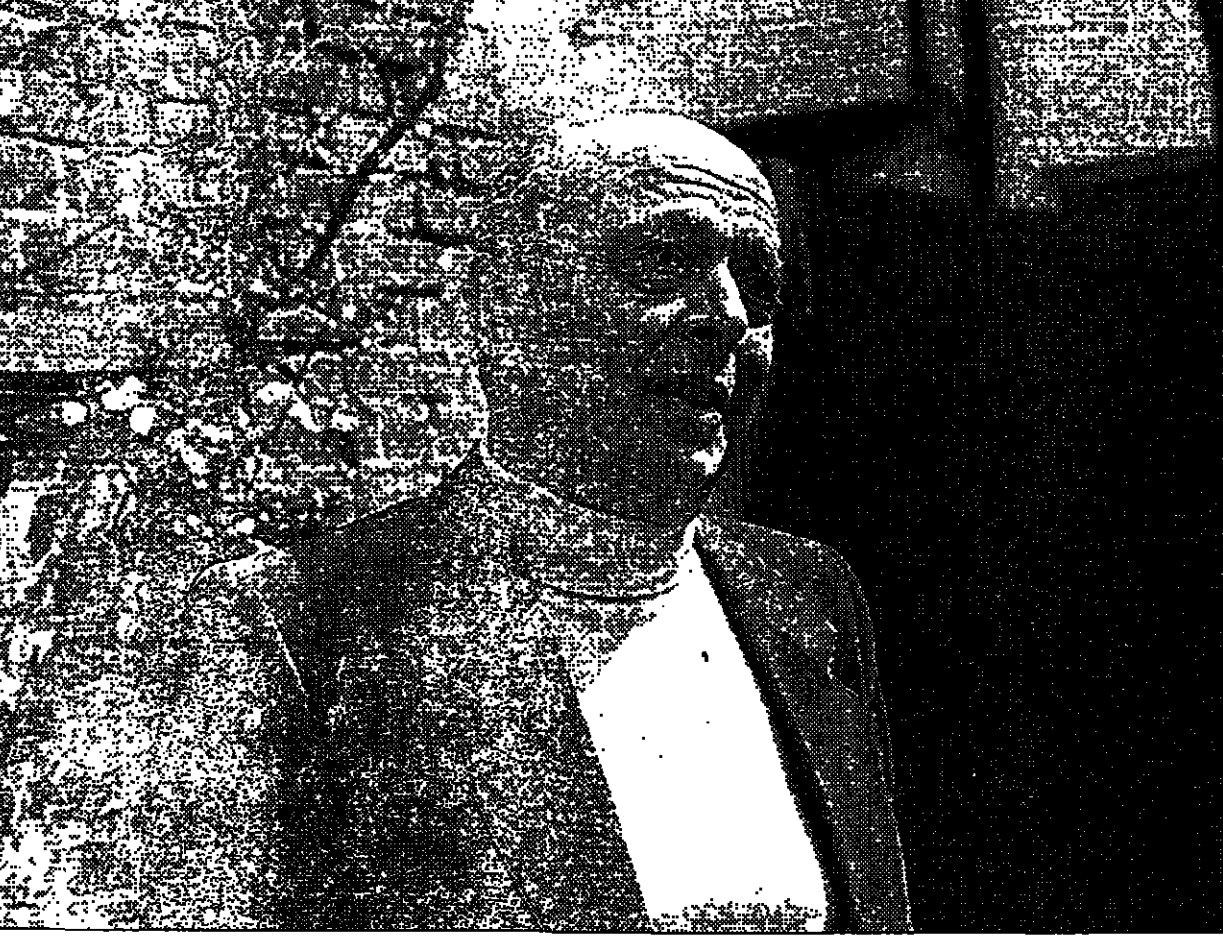
A fusion of cultures

Ivan V. Lalić, who has died aged 55, had become a Yugoslavian poet...

about his poetry's central theme. He picked up a book "My childhood and boyhood in the war..."

slightly older Vasko Popa, whose weird, brilliant, atavistic verse played a key role in convincing apparatchiks...

A garden turned in compass towards the sea and stayed in the blue anaesthetics of afternoon shadows...



Memory and conflict... Lalić's work was marked by his experience of growing up in the second world war



The perfect guide... Peter Martini (centre) in St Petersburg for a break after the elections...

Right man in Russia

Peter Martini, who has died aged 31 in a road accident near Novgorod in Russia...

Skys TV and the BBC, he taught himself to be a brave and efficient journalist in the field...

Birthdays: Eddie Bell, chairman and publisher, Thursday, August 2; Peter O'Toole, actor...

Peter Ludwig, the German art collector and chocolate magnate who has died...

Born into a cultivated merchant family in Koblenz, Ludwig was introduced to contemporary art...



Ludwig... making himself a big name in art collections

"What matters is today, the now." Unlike Charles Saatchi and the Italian collector Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo...

extended to the workers in his chocolate factories and, just before his death, he was planning to sack most of them...

Letters: Anthony Walker writes: Mervyn Cooke's obituary July 29...

Jackdaw

domesticating animals and plants. In some ways this is urban art...

Silent spring

When the pyramids of Giza were shimmering and new, these figures already were as ancient as the pyramids...

Coarse horse

"Either the horse goes, or I do." So what happens next? For most horse-wringing women...

BritFood

How about starting with a Szechwan pork salad? Have it served into a Chinese? No, it's on the Modern British menu...

It's bugged

You set out with a trowel and merry heart to liberate some pot-bound prisoners from the florist and before you know it...

Way West

When Harrison R Crandall first saw Jenny Lake, Wyoming, this area south of Yellowstone was quiet and wild...

Vanessa Harlow

Early on, Crandall and his wife stayed year-round in Jackson Hole hoping to establish the business and enjoy a snowbound life...

Engagements

Richard Mulholland and Nicole Bendis: The wedding of Nicole Bendis and Richard Mulholland...

Marriages

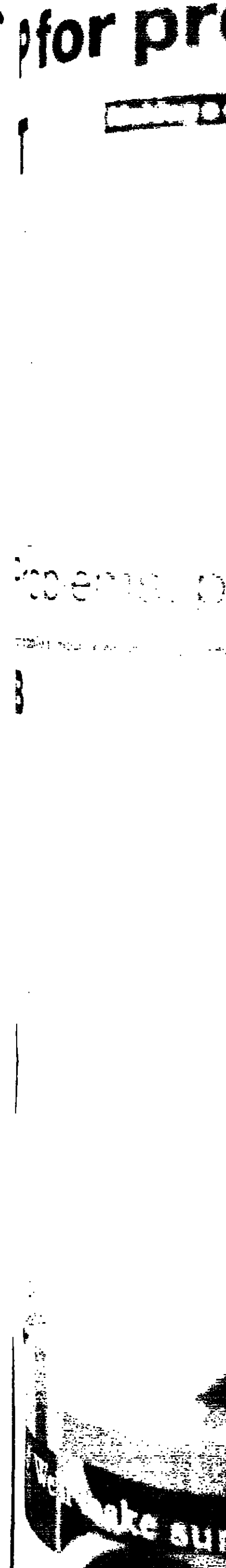
Barbara Jones and Barry Jones: The marriage of Barbara Jones and Barry Jones...

Deaths

Denis Staunton: Peter Ludwig, businessman and art collector, born July 9, 1925; died July 22, 1996.

Deaths

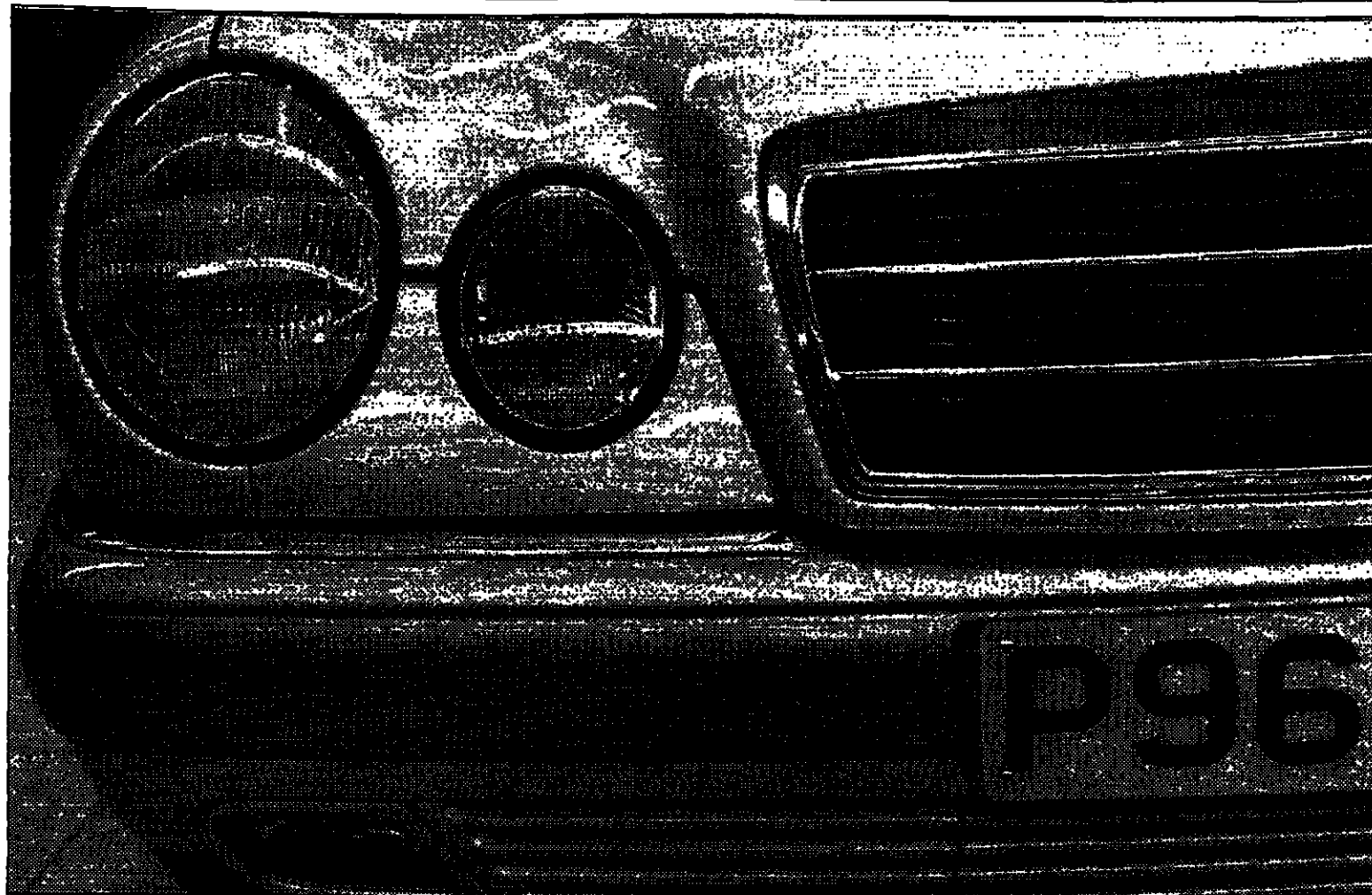
Peter Martini: Peter Martini, journalist, born February 16, 1965; died July 9, 1996.



Motor industry expects record sales to come on a plate, says Simon Beavis



P-power... Mercedes dealer Normand has in its central London showroom just the thing for a date-conscious buyer



P for prosperity

THE rush for P-registration cars yesterday left the motor industry predicting that this month's sales of new vehicles would be the second-highest on record and push the year's car tally over two million.

But the system of changing number plate identifiers every August could soon be a thing of the past, after complaints from carmakers and motor traders, who find it increasingly difficult to cope with the mid-summer dash.

Between 20 and 25 per cent of annual car sales are recorded in August.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders says the return of consumer confidence could push sales of P-reg cars this month to 485,000, the highest August haul since 1989, when 500,900 cars were sold. This would put the industry on course for two million car sales in 1996, against the market peak of 2.3 million sales in 1989.

Registrations indicating the

Making a date with £1m

SALESMAN Keith Hughes earned the title "million pound man" after selling 25 Daimler and Jaguar cars — all for collection yesterday. Mr Hughes, aged 57, who works at Evan Halshaw Jaguar, Birmingham, said his recipe for sales success was "persistence and retention of business". His boss, Peter Eaton, put his success down to sheer professionalism: "He's been running around like a ferret!"

□ The AA received its first P-reg call-out at 12.40pm — 40 minutes after the cars went on sale. By late afternoon the AA and RAC reported 112 calls. For the AA, problems included trouble with security systems, gear box seizures, "knocking noises in the engine," a boot that would not shut and a gear lever that came off. The RAC said it had been called out to flat batteries, fuel leaks, the wrong fuel being used and even a couple of wheel changes — "they didn't know where the jack was kept!"

year of purchase were introduced in January 1988 and changed to an August start in 1997.

Preparing for the August rush has become increasingly tricky in an industry still suffering from the last recession — the deepest post-war downturn — and the protracted uncertainty among buyers that followed.

Building stockpiles for

August has hurt car companies, particularly in years when sales have proved disappointing. The system also runs counter to the precise inventory planning that has come with just-in-time manufacturing.

Dealers also have to find extra space and staff to cope with the sales rush, and the recent trend for competitive marketing initiatives to lure

reluctant buyers has left them feeling the pinch.

Consumers, too, find little to recommend the system unless they have a particular penchant for on-upmanship.

A car bought on July 31 instantly becomes worth less than a similar model bought the next day. One industry source said yesterday: "The chances are the July car will have been built after the one sold in August, anyway."

The police have remained supporters of the year identifier as making for easier identification of cars involved in crime.

Now the Department of Transport, chaired by the industry, is considering whether the system should be scrapped. A consultation document may not emerge until much later this year or early next.

The most favoured replacement is a quarterly system of registration. Other options include identification by town of origin or colour coding of plates.

Vauxhall buys car 'intelligence' to avoid the jams tomorrow

Richard Thomas

VAUXHALL cars are to be fitted with "intelligent" information systems to guide motorists around traffic snarl-ups, it was announced yesterday.

Britain's second-biggest motor manufacturer has placed an order for 100,000 Oracle traffic information providers — which work through car radio systems — from Trafficmaster plc. After news of this first big Oracle deal, shares in Trafficmaster rose 34p to close at 353p.

Some Vauxhall models are expected to be marketed with the system as standard from early 1997.

Michelle Murphy, Trafficmaster marketing manager, said the company was also in discussion with other "big name" car firms, with further announcements imminent.

"Over the last 10 years, security and safety have been the big issues. Now on-board systems — the creation of the "intelligent"

car — are the selling points," she said.

The Oracle system is triggered by beacons spaced at two-mile intervals along motorways, which cut into radio programmes to issue traffic warnings — or flash a red light — and use voice-based technology to describe road conditions.

David Martell, Trafficmaster's chief executive said: "This contract is the first order from an OEM — original equipment manufacturer — for Oracle and represents an important milestone in the development of the company."

The Oracle system — which was unveiled at the Silverstone motor show in April — is an offshoot of Trafficmaster's off-the-shelf TrafficMate, which has so far sold 50,000 screen and voice-based units.

A Vauxhall spokesman said the firm was satisfied with the deal, and that no further details would be given of how the system would be introduced until later in the year.

'Animal tail' will be cut shorter

OUTLOOK/Mergers and takeovers are order of the day as the investment trust sector slims down. Ian King reports

ASKED to name the biggest bids launched in 1996, most City folk would probably come up with Rentokil's £2 billion swoop on BET, along with the two-way fights for Lloyds Chemists and Southern Water.

Yet the investment trust sector — not renowned for dramatic skirmishes — has thrown up several intriguing contests. The latest, launched on Wednesday, promises to be a cracker.

UK European Growth Trust (TREG), a fund specialising in small and medium-sized European companies, has bid in the region of £500 million for the Kleinwort European Privatisation Trust (KEPIT).

At its launch, KEPIT — along with the similarly-sized Mercury European Privatisation Trust — seemed a fool-proof idea. Privatisation, a sure-fire winner with investors on this side of the English Channel, would surely offer some tasty morsels on the continent.

Small investors agreed, sending in cheques by the lorryload, helping the two "terrible twins" to raise £1 billion between them. Demand was so huge, in fact, that Kleinwort had to refund around £250 million.

However, the funds have been proved a huge disappointment to the 120,000 or so punters that piled in, not least because the markets fell shortly after the pair came to market.

In addition, with regulation apparently stiffer on the con-

tinents, and with state assets not being sold at quite the bargain basement prices they were in the UK, European privatisations have not offered the bonanzas that they have in Britain.

Accordingly, shares in the two funds have continually traded at a substantial discount to net asset value, prompting both Mercury and Kleinwort to take radical action in the form of reorganisations and share buy-backs.

Now, TREG — itself capitalised at a mere £140 million — has decided on a more radical step and has pledged, if successful, to liquidate KEPIT's portfolio. This gives KEPIT's investors the chance to cash in their original investment at close to net asset value, or trade it in for shares in TREG, which has been highly regarded for some time.

Yesterday, KEPIT rejected TREG's approach, and City rumours suggest that there may yet be another bidder waiting in the wings.

It would be no great surprise if there was. According to Hamish Buchan, investment trust guru at broker NatWest Securities, the sector is like an animal with an extremely long tail.

In other words, the 126 investment trusts in the All-Share index account for around £31 billion worth of assets, while the next 111 trusts represent a mere £3 billion. That means the investment trust sector is ripe for rationalisation, and there are many trusts — particularly those sitting on discounts of 10 per cent or more — that look vulnerable.

The investment trust sector is set for a lot more consolidation over the next 18 months. The bid for KEPIT could just be the start.

Top five Investment Trust bids

Bidder	Target	Deal size
TR European Growth IT	Kleinwort European Privatisation IT	£500m
Regent Kingpin IT	GT Chile Growth Fund	£350m
British Empire Secs	Selective Assets Trust	£172m
TP Pacific IT	Thomson Asia Emerging Markets IT	£150m
Flaming Worldwide IT	Flaming International High Income IT	£135m

Problems, problems lurk in gas pipeline

Monopolies inquiry would cap privatised utility's crisis-prone decade, write SIMON BEAVIS and CHRIS BARRIE

BITISH Gas has become accustomed to living in a state of siege. But after two years of unbroken crisis — including a political furor over fat-cat pay, soaring customer complaints, and warfare with the rest of the oil and gas world — the privatised company knows that worse could be yet to come.

The signs are that by October a row between the company and its main regulator, the Office of Gas Supply (Ofgas), will be hurled into the unpredictable arena of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

It will be the second time since privatisation in 1986 that the company has undergone a full MMC investigation. There have also been inquiries by the Office of Fair Trading and a range of government initiatives, many launched in deliberate contradiction to the work of the MMC and the OFT.

The present row concerns new price controls for British Gas's pipelines business, TransCo. Ofgas has preliminary proposals to cut charges to shippers using TransCo pipes by between 20 and 28 per cent from next year.

More fundamentally, it has based its assumptions on a revaluation of TransCo's asset base and cut the allowable return on those assets,

which will cut the company's revenues by more than 280 million a year.

British Gas sees this as retrospective regulation; in effect, the regulator saying that shareholders got the company on a steal and seeking to grab back past riches.

Final proposals are expected to be delivered — six weeks late — in about two weeks' time. There is no whiff of compromise in the air. The company says thousands of jobs will be lost, safety compromised and dividends cut.

Clare Spottiswoode, Ofgas director general, warns that the MMC could be even tougher than she is — the general "make my day".

As Simon Flowers, analyst with NatWest Markets, puts it: "Ofgas believes deeply in the principle of what it is doing. It believes the company has had the luxury of a regulatory formula which has benefited it hugely since privatisation."

British Gas came out of an MMC inquiry in 1983 thinking it had a reliable regulatory framework: "The company... believes the proposals run totally counter to the concept of regulatory stability that the company thought the 1983 MMC had sorted out."

The stakes are high, and not just for British Gas. The Gov-

ernment's pledge to open the domestic gas market to competition by 1998 would be in jeopardy if the fight about TransCo's prices goes to the MMC.

But, having made political capital out of promises from Ms Spottiswoode that the price caps could reduce domestic bills by £20 a year, ministers are in no mood to spike the watchdog's guns. An MMC inquiry would not be complete until the middle of next year — after the general election, when unscrambling the mess could be someone else's problem.

The privatisation was once hailed as the peak of the Thatcherite revolution. It was the sell-off on which thousands of small shareholders, or Sids,



got a taste of the get-rich-quick culture of the 1980s. Others welcomed the chance to sign up for a secure long-term investment and remain part of the continuing army of small shareholders. Now these shareholders are in revolt.

British Gas shares were sold to investors at 138p a share, payable in three instalments. Two years after flotation, the shares had reached 157p. Recently they have been hovering around 191p, a premium hardly in line with the riches made by investors in the electricity industry.

Investors in British Gas face even more unpredictable turbulence as the company struggles to unravel up to

£40 billion of take-or-pay gas contracts which commit it to buying North Sea gas at prices greater than those prevailing in the spot market. Oil groups have been reluctant to renegotiate, but BG insists it will secure new terms in 1997.

Further complicating British Gas's financial forecasting is a legal wrangle with the Government over tax paid on gas from some North Sea

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.845	France 7.515	Italy 2.320	Singapore 2.147
Austria 13.825	Germany 2.221	Malta 0.5300	South Africa 9.02
Belgium 45.72	Greece 357.30	Netherlands 2.8885	Spain 189.50
Canada 2.087	Hong Kong 11.72	New Zealand 2.2025	Sweden 10.11
Cyprus 0.6885	India 55.35	Norway 9.46	Switzerland 1.80
Denmark 8.625	Ireland 0.8325	Portugal 230.00	Turkey 124.600
Finland 9.924	Israel 4.81	Saudi Arabia 5.80	USA 1.52

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli sheqel).

News in brief

2,000 Names back Lloyd's offer

LLOYD'S £3.2 billion reconstruction plans received a further boost yesterday when nearly 2,000 Names from the Merritt action group voted to accept the offer of £85 million plus expenses. But the market received a setback after investors who have paid their share of the market's £8 billion debts decided to seek a judicial review of the terms of settlement offer.

Paying Names will receive less generous treatment than those who do not pay. Lloyd's yesterday ruled out any extra money, but the action represents an unwelcome legal intervention with just 28 days before the offer needs to be approved. — Lisa Buckingham

RBS takes over custody

THE Royal Bank of Scotland further boosted its custody business yesterday with news that it is to pay up to £20 million for SG Warburg's custody and investor services division and certain assets owned by Mercury Asset Management.

After the deal goes through, the RBS will be making it one of the biggest custodians in the UK, with £250 billion worth of assets in custody. The Warburg division's 700 employees will transfer to the bank. Plans are to combine the businesses in a new subsidiary of the bank, RBS Trust Bank. — Sarah Whitebloom

Hinchliffe hearing

STEPHEN HINCHLIFFE, former chairman of collapsed retail group Facia, and fellow director Christopher Harrison will face a boardroom disqualification hearing in January. A Newcastle judge ruled yesterday that Mr Hinchliffe and Mr Harrison have until October 24 to file their evidence in court and the Department of Trade and Industry must respond by January 6. The DTI wants the two men barred from holding directorships in connection with their dealings with Boxgrey, a shell company. — Roger Coote

Homebase homecoming

SAINSBURY is to buy out the minority partner in its Homebase DIY operation. The company said yesterday it would pay 565 million for the 26 per cent stake held by Belgian DIY specialist GIB, and would repay a £12.5 million loan. — Roger Coote

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Finance Guardian

Doing rather well over here ... and over there, too



President Clinton, flanked by economic adviser Joe Stiglitz, Vice President Al Gore and National Economic Council chairman Laura Tyson, hails the economic figures PHOTOGRAPH STEPHEN JAFFE

Notebook Sign-on fees are unwelcome



Edited by
Mark Milner

WHEN it comes to fat cats in the boardroom there often appear to be few to match the privatised companies. But a survey yesterday shows that — in one area, at least — privatised companies are merely taking a lead from their private sector brethren. Labour Research's study reveals that in the past financial year, 66 directors received golden handshakes of six figures or more, sharing a total of \$22.9 million. That was before payments such as the \$665,000 expected for Alan Michels — who quit yesterday as chief executive of cable TV group TeleWest — are taken into account. Only 10 of those payments were made by former government-owned companies.

Reserve to bump up interest rates later this month. Luckily for the President, however, the growth data was accompanied by the latest Purchasing Managers' report pointing to a sharp but unexpected slowdown in the manufacturing sector. The result was that bond prices went through the roof as the odds on a rate rise lengthened. Wall Street's optimism is based on the expectation that the Fed's Alan Greenspan will pay more attention to the forward looking Purchasing Managers' report than to the backward looking growth data. This is a reasonable assessment, given Mr Greenspan's reputation as a number-cruncher par excellence. The Fed may suspect that the softness of manufacturing is an aberration, and it is probably right. There is little prospect of a serious downturn while consumer spending is so robust, but Mr Greenspan will probably wait until the open market committee at the end of September before making up his mind on rates. By then, the political obituaries for Bob Dole may already have been written.

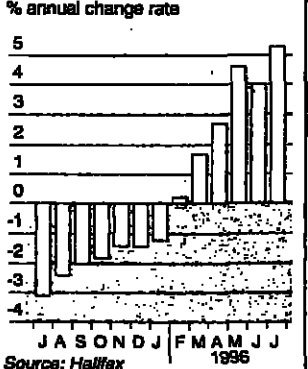
Boom in Britain

Larry Elliott
and Sarah Ryle

HOUSE prices are rising at their fastest for almost seven years as consumer confidence returns to levels last seen in the Lawson boom of the late 1980s. Figures out today from the Halifax Building Society show that the price of property resumed its year-long upward trend last month following the small dip recorded in June.

over recent months, the survey showed. Despite growing fears that new working conditions and the rise of part-time employment have led to job insecurity, Business Strategies said that people are increasingly optimistic about their job prospects. Director David Fell said: "The argument about insecurity has been overblown and some of it is a chattering class phenomenon. We think the case is more that the people who are putting forward that argument are now more insecure rather than that the whole labour market is insecure. People in the South-east

House prices



Source: Halifax

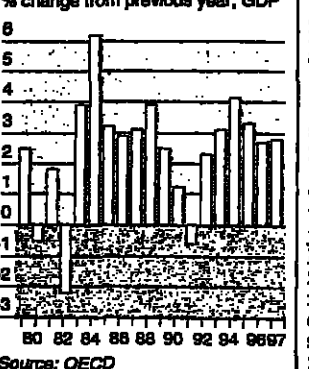
Boom in the US

Mark Tran in New York

PRESIDENT Clinton yesterday seized the opportunity to boost the chances of his reelection presented by the latest set of buoyant US economic figures. But further signs of brisk growth in the second quarter brought intensified pressure on the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates later in the month as a pre-emptive strike against inflation — a move which could lose the administration some political support.

of accomplishments — including strong growth, low inflation, 10 million new jobs and rising wages — and described the economy as "the strongest in a generation". The latest economic numbers will come as another body blow to presidential candidate Bob Dole. With the economy performing so well, Mr Dole's hopes of unseating Mr Clinton, who is coasting comfortably in the polls, look increasingly doomed. Mr Dole is expected to unveil a big tax cut package, possibly next week, to inject some life

US growth



Source: OECD

into his moribund campaign. Even the markets cheered the latest economic data as the early Dow rose to 5667, up 38.10 — building on significant gains in the past few days. Although growth surged in the second quarter, there was evidence that the economy would cool off in the second half of the year.

In a surprise to economists, US manufacturing growth slowed in July according to the widely-watched National Association of Purchasing Management's index. The index fell to 50.2 per cent last month from 54.3 per cent in June, when economists had been expecting a rise to 55 per cent. The purchasing managers' group also reported a very slow rate of economic growth in July after expanding strongly in June. The news immediately pushed up prices of the benchmark 30-year treasury bond, depressing the yield to 6.83 per cent.

But market psychology could quickly change with today's release of the July jobs report. Wall Street believes the economy created 200,000 new jobs last month, should the figure overshoot these estimates substantially, the markets may take fright.

Clinton's figuring

JOHN MAJOR must be casting an envious glance at Bill Clinton basks in the sort of opinion poll lead currently being enjoyed by Tony Blair. On present form, the November presidential election looks like being the biggest landslide for the Democrats since Lyndon Johnson trounced Barry Goldwater in 1964.

One of Mr Clinton's big advantages is that fate seems to smile on him. Witness yesterday's economic data, where the increase in the annual growth rate to 4.2 per cent in the second quarter would normally have had the markets baying for the Federal

Yorkshire sets pace for dividend surge

Simon Beavis
Industrial Editor

CONTROVERSIAL new wave of shareholder demands by privatised electricity companies was launched yesterday when Yorkshire Electricity said it was to boost dividends this year by more than 34 per cent. The move comes only days after City brokers SBC Warburg predicted that utilities were likely to splash out another £1.3 billion in sweeteners to shareholders before the election, bringing the total handed back to investors in the last three years to more than £7 billion.

better deal to shareholders than to customers. In a statement to the AGM, chairman Chris Hampson said the decision to release increasing funds to invest followed an "outstanding year" for the company. He said the rich returns for shareholders were balanced by moves to cut bills for customers. "Our track record of delivering increased efficiency, offering the lowest prices for average general domestic customers and providing excellent returns to our shareholders underlines our commitment to being among the most successful companies in the sector," he said. The Yorkshire incentive scheme is just one of a number of similar shareholder packages expected from other electricity and water companies. The rush to offer new sweeteners to shareholders is part of a campaign by the utilities to "protect" themselves from Labour's threatened windfall tax. But Labour has already warned that it will not be deterred from its plans, arguing that the companies' capacity to fund payouts justifies the need for a tax.

Chemicals hurt Shell and Hanson

Sarah Whitebloom

CRASHING prices and margins in the chemicals industry yesterday saw Royal Dutch/Shell, Europe's biggest oil company, suffer a fall in profits and the conglomerate Hanson confirm the closure of a chemicals plant. Market concerns over the state of the industry were heightened by Shell's statement that the difficult trading conditions would continue until there was a significant upturn in the growth of major European economies. It had been anticipated that Shell's 1996 results would

mirror last year's, when a weak first half was made up for by a strong second half. But this hope was fading yesterday after Shell's comments on the parlous state of the chemicals business. Meanwhile, Hanson disclosed that it as well as closing one of its British plants it had reined back plans to expand its subsidiary SCM's chemicals operations because of market conditions. Yesterday's double blow follows ICI's disclosures two weeks ago that it was stepping up plans to sell its bulk chemicals business after trading profits from the operation plunged. Shell revealed yesterday

that its total net income was down 8 per cent, to £1.18 billion, in the second quarter of the year, largely due to income from Shell's chemicals business plunging 54 per cent compared with the same

period last year. The division turned in income of just £185 million from its international operations. Shell closed down 11p at 911 1/4p. Hanson ended 4 1/2p lighter at 156 3/4p.

Whitehall acts to reassure Greeks

Lisa Buckingham

THE Government has activated a damage limitation exercise to prevent the potential collapse of London's standing as the world's premier shipping centre after a tax raid on Kappa Maritime. Kappa is owned by Lou Kollakis, one of the most influential Greek shipowners in the capital with a reputed fortune of £250 million. Now, in the wake of the investigation into Kappa and Mr Kollakis, Whitehall and the Inland Revenue have given assurances on the

status of foreign-owned shipping groups. Although the Revenue would not comment, it is understood that the offices of both Kappa and some of its financial and legal advisers have been raided. The Government's concern is that other London-based Greek shipowners will take fright and move their business elsewhere. That would deprive the Baltic Exchange of about a third of its business. The Baltic is the premier market for chartering ships and accounts, directly and indirectly, for about £2 billion of foreign exchange earnings a year.

Guardian Crossword No 20,721

- Across
- 1 Keep quiet! To talk rubbish is out of order (9,2,5)
 - 2 Become aware that lies are rife (7)
 - 11 A passion for European travel (7)
 - 12 A girl is caught in wire netting (6)
 - 13 Lib. defies whipl! That shows scepticism (9)
 - 14 Acknowledge juvenile's not Conservative (5)
 - 15 Lord sets a course/mine that's far from clear (6)
 - 16 Enclosed area stocked with drink is a challenge to those in the pub (4,2,3)
 - 19 Have a strong drink before heart test (4)
 - 20 Greek goddess gets washed. That's hard and dangerous (9)

- Down
- 2 Agent loses head and hugs celebrity artist (6)
 - 3 Detachment and enign initially get together (6)
 - 4 Make a change and put me in last (5)
 - 5 Exaggerate the number of deliveries to the gallery (9)
 - 6 Writer got up earlier in the afternoon to produce literary work (6,4)
 - 7 Artificial intelligence bears out politician was elsewhere at the time (5)
 - 8 Regular's career is a stock type (6,5)
 - 9 Often hear door forced to get another drink (3,3,3,4)
 - 15 Make the little beast bow! and throw (8)
 - 16 Exercise is about to stiffen soldiers' disposition (9)
 - 17 A briefcase is left with a page (5)
 - 21 Toulouse-Lautrec took part in producing what's right (6)

Set by Chionie

- 22 Fried into agreement in Kant (5)
 - 23 Authorisation to wind up the clock (5)
- Solution tomorrow
- IF stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 328 228. Calls cost 30p per min, plus 10p per min at other times. Service supplied by ATB